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ABSTRACT

This report describes work by Public/Private Ventures to mount a faith-based initiative that would produce credible evidence and lessons concerning the capacity, limits, and practices of faith-based organizations in working with high-risk youth. Organizations in 15 cities agreed to participate in the National Faith Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth, entering partnerships with the justice community and with other faith-based organizations, and recruiting high-risk youth and providing them with a range of services including education, employment, and mentoring. The report documents the first phase of implementation of the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth. Cross-site and case study data indicated that the faith community was successful in both securing the enthusiastic cooperation of representatives of the juvenile justice community and attracting young people who had committed juvenile of criminal offenses or were considered at high risk of doing so. Faith played an important role in program operations, though there was little evidence of proselytizing or coercion. Overall, while small- to medium-sized faith-based organizations have the capacity to form effective partnerships with the justice community and recruit high-risk youth, they nevertheless need support in implementing intentional programs that are of sufficient intensity and duration to have an impact on participant behavior. (SM)

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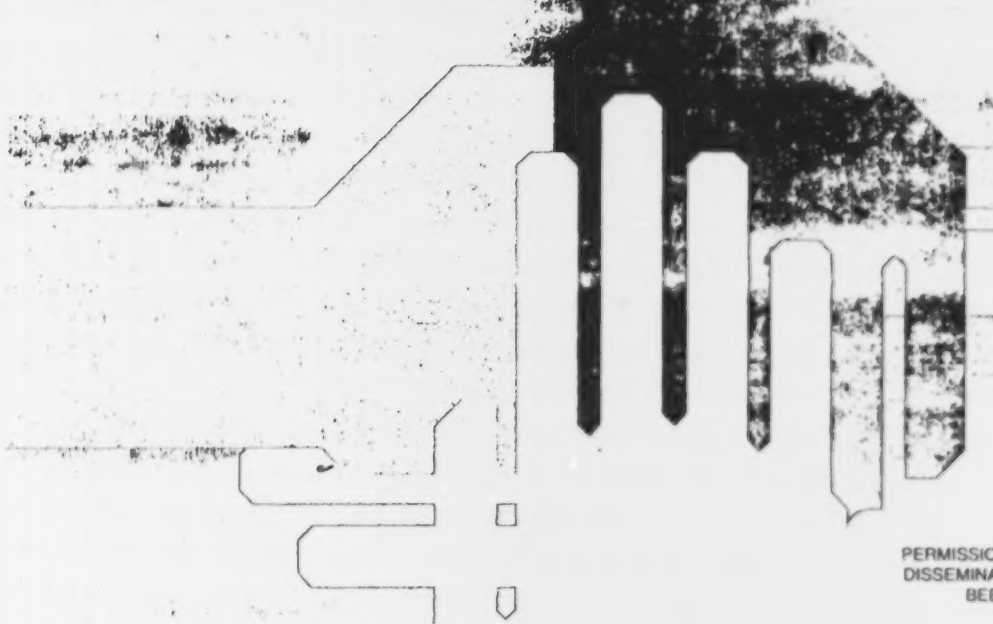
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE FOR HIGH-RISK YOUTH



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Public/Private Ventures is a national nonprofit organization that seeks to improve the effectiveness of social policies and programs. P/PV designs, tests and studies initiatives that increase supports, skills and opportunities of residents of low-income communities; works with policymakers to see that the lessons and evidence produced are reflected in policy; and provides training, technical assistance and learning opportunities to practitioners based on documented effective practices.

Branch Associates is a Philadelphia-based, minority-owned research, evaluation and technical assistance firm that works on both a local and national basis with government agencies, foundations, intermediaries and nonprofit organizations.

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We are similarly indebted to the congregational leaders, juvenile justice representatives, staff and volunteers at the sites for the courage they exhibited in undertaking this new approach to improving their communities. They should be commended, as well, for their willingness to cooperate with the research and data collection requirements of the initiative, and for providing feedback on this report. The young people participating in these programs have also been generous in giving us information about their behaviors, and allowing us to observe their program activities.

Particular thanks are owed to the staff of the four faith-based organizations that served as intensive research sites during this reporting period—Indianapolis Ten-Point Coalition, Clergy United for Juvenile Justice in Cleveland, Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches and the Metro Denver Black Church Initiative. These four organizations hosted the research team twice during data collection, and permitted an up-close look at the way faith-based organizations operate.

Many P/PV and Branch Associates staff members contributed to the development of the report. P/PV's President, Gary Walker, and Karen Walker, P/PV's Vice President for Research, provided invaluable feedback and support in the shaping of the report. The author's visits to the intensive research sites were jointly conducted with Tracey Hartmann and William Kandel, fellow members of the research team, who also wrote insightful summaries and analyses of these visits, which served as the foundation on which the report was built. Tracey Hartmann has also authored a companion report, *Collaborating for High-Risk Youth: Faith and Justice Partnerships*, whose insights on the process of collaboration at the faith-based organizations have also helped to shape this report's findings and conclusions.

The contributions of the other members of P/PV's National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth team—Shawn Bauldry, Wendy Egelkamp, Jodina Hicks, Angela Jernigan, Phyllis Lawrence, Shawn Mooring, Will Walker and Crystal Wyatt—have also been significant. Program officers maintained an ongoing presence at the sites—monitoring their progress and providing technical assistance. They also collected data about the progress of the sites and provided feedback on earlier drafts of the report. The team members responsible for working with the MIS system—its design and implementation, as well as the analysis of the data it produced—provided the quantitative base for many of the report's findings. Bob Penn, P/PV's Executive Vice President, and Fred Davie, P/PV's Vice President for Faith-Based Programs, provided overall leadership for the initiative, and critical feedback on this report.

Very special thanks are due to Linda Jucovy, who edited the report and provided significant guidance in its shaping. Maxine Sherman, Natalie Jaffe, Patricia Wieland, Penelope Malish and Gena Carlton provided additional editing, production and design services, and Gayle Preston gave excellent administrative support to the entire team.

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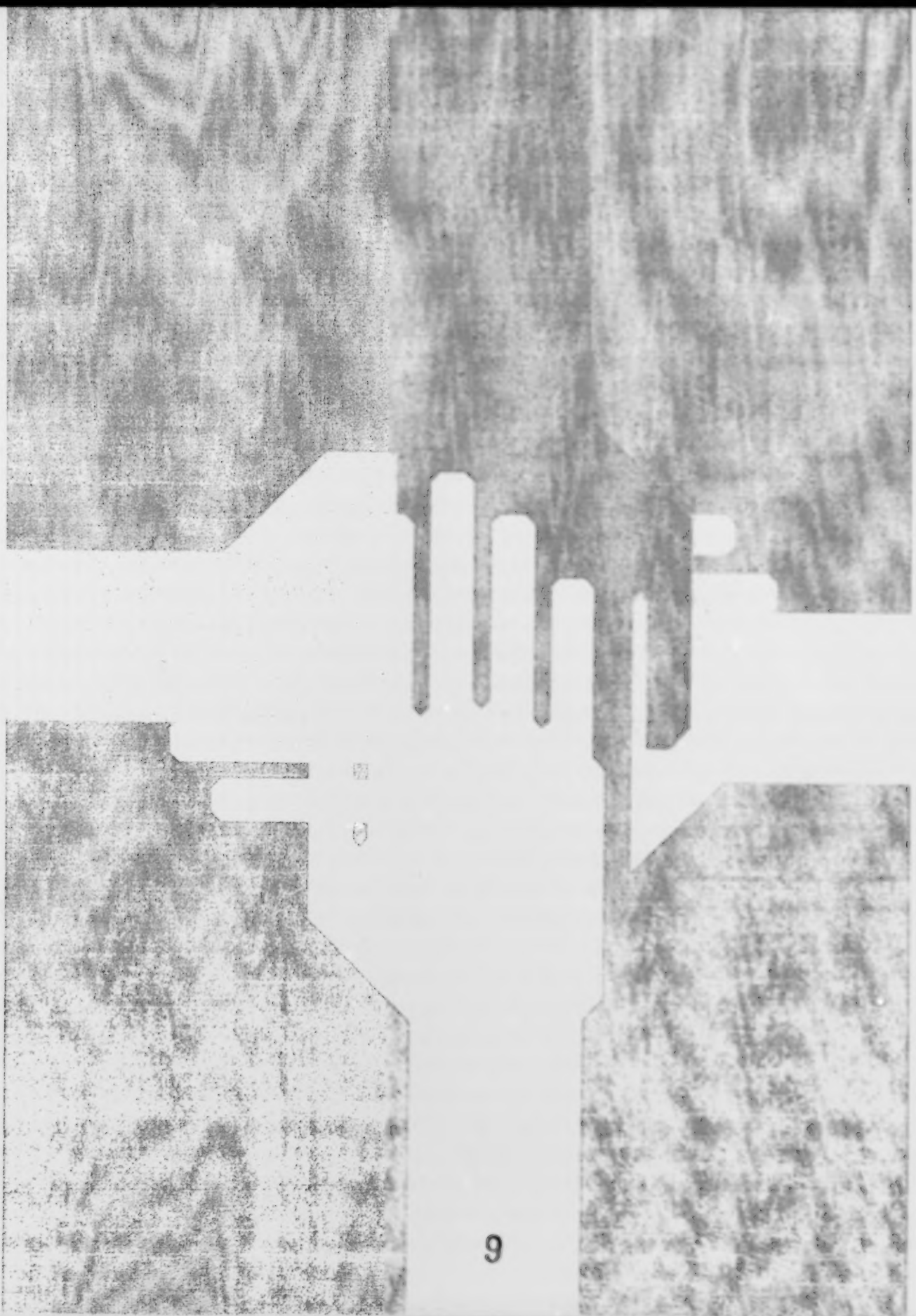

Executive Summary

As early as 1996, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) was seriously interested in the possibility that faith-based organizations could be engaged on behalf of youth who had been involved in criminal activity. This interest stemmed, in part, from a concern about whether programs and activities of proven effectiveness in preventing young people from becoming involved in crime, or dealing constructively with those who already had, existed at a sufficient scale to make an impact on the lives of residents of low-income communities.

P/PV's interest in the role that churches and congregations could play had its roots in an assessment of the assets of the faith community. The most important of these concerned location—simply being there. While many social service organizations and institutions had left the nation's most distressed communities, the church remained a significant presence. Moreover, the faith-based organizations located in these communities had many other resources at their command, including buildings, volunteers, and a tradition of outreach and service. The question was whether these organizations, in the aggregate, could serve as a vehicle for the delivery of social programming for the high-risk youth who reside in these communities.

P/PV was also encouraged by the "Boston Miracle" (the dramatic turnaround in Boston's violent juvenile crime rate of the mid-1990s), which demonstrated that a partnership could be formed between the faith and justice communities. This turnaround was, in part, attributed to collaboration between the Boston Police Department, the Probation Department, youth-focused city agencies and

a coalition of African-American religious groups that had been organized by Reverend Eugene Rivers to form the Boston Ten Point Coalition. The Ten Point Coalition's mandate was to patrol the streets and demand that gang members stop their violence or be turned over to the police. Yet, they also offered support—appearance at their probation hearings and access to education and employment services—to youth who deserved a second chance.

Drawing on these experiences, P/PV began discussions about the possibility of mounting a faith-based initiative that would produce credible evidence and lessons concerning the capacity, limits and practices of faith-based organizations in working with high-risk youth. Subsequently, organizations in 15 cities agreed to participate in the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth, entering into partnerships with the justice community as well as with other faith-based organizations, and recruiting high-risk youth and providing them with a range of services that would include education, employment and mentoring.

Initiative sites are located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Bronx, New York; Brooklyn, New York; Cleveland, Ohio; Denver, Colorado; Detroit, Michigan; Fresno, California; Indianapolis, Indiana; Los Angeles, California; Oakland, California; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; San Francisco, California; Seattle, Washington; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Washington, D.C. In addition, the Boston Ten Point Coalition has played a role in the initiative, serving as an exemplar and a source of new innovations.

The first phase of the implementation of the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth is documented in detail in the following chapters. Some of its initial lessons are summarized below:

1. **The faith community was successful in both securing the enthusiastic cooperation of representatives of the juvenile justice community and attracting high-risk youth.** Most sites developed partnerships with the justice community (including police, juvenile courts, probation, juvenile detention facilities and district attorney's offices) with relative ease. The justice community was interested in undertaking these partnerships because of what it saw as the church's assets: its presence in high-crime communities and the respect in which it is held by community residents. In addition, the justice community was itself seeking alternative responses to increasingly high rates of juvenile arrests and incarceration, and saw faith-based organizations as a viable option.

Relying on referrals from the justice system, as well as their own networks and outreach efforts, the sites succeeded in recruiting a particularly difficult-to-reach population of youth. They enrolled 494 participants, of whom the majority was African American (88%) and male (72%) with a mean age of a little over 16. More than three-fifths of these youth had committed juvenile offenses that ranged from curfew violations and truancy to burglary, robbery and assault. Sixty percent had been arrested at least once.

2. **While faith played an important role in program operations, there was little evidence of proselytizing or coercion.** The sites were keenly aware of the need to avoid practices that could jeopardize their ability to seek and receive public and private funding to serve high-risk youth in their communities. They were therefore careful to avoid any activity that could be interpreted as overt proselytizing.

   At the same time, however, many of the sites elected to create programs that were rich in faith content. A number of faith-related practices were in evidence, prayer being the most prevalent of them. Other practices included reading and studying sacred texts, incorporating spiritual concepts into program curricula, and exposing participants to religious music. According to program staff, these practices were more an expression of the faith of the staff and volunteers associated with the program than an attempt to proselytize the participants.

3. **While small- to medium-sized faith-based organizations have the capacity to form effective partnerships with the justice community and recruit high-risk youth, they nevertheless need support in implementing intentional programs that are of sufficient intensity and duration to have an impact on participant behavior.** This study suggests that, though they are capable of considerable creativity in program implementation, even the best of these organizations reach a point where they need to draw on resources beyond their own to maintain their momentum, expand their capabilities, and become reliable partners with the government and philanthropic organizations in addressing the problems that beset the nation's low-income communities.

   Specifically, we found that these programs need both programmatic and financial support to attain these benchmarks. On the programmatic side, we found that when allowed to follow their own leads in developing programs consistent with their own sensibilities, these organizations do their best

when creating a safe and caring environment in which youth can gather and experience the informal, relational approach to programming common among faith-based organizations. They are less adept when it comes to the delivery of specific programs—in education and employment, for instance —that provide participants with the specific and intensive levels of instruction and information required for youth to achieve the significant improvements that can provide a meaningful alternative to criminal involvement. In their mentoring programs, they experienced similar difficulties in putting in place the kinds of recruitment, screening, training, matching and supervision practices that make up the infrastructure of more established programs.

To reach this level of proficiency, small- to mid-size faith-based organizations of the kind represented in this demonstration will require ongoing support in organizational development, program design and implementation. Such support might involve providing sites with the materials, instruction and technical assistance that translate best practices in social programming for youth into explicit program operations that they can adapt into their operations wholesale. Such an approach would not challenge them to create new program models, but allow them to more immediately benefit from proven models that have already been developed, tested and found effective.

Small- to mid-sized faith-based organizations will also need to look to government and the philanthropic community for financial support to continue this work. While their ability to draw on volunteers may offset overall costs, the increasing need for improved organizational infrastructure and professional staff will eventually outstrip their own resources.

This first look at the efforts of small- to mid-sized faith-based organizations in implementing programs for high-risk youth has confirmed their status as an underutilized resource with potential for addressing important social issues. However, significant external support is required to make this potential a functional reality.

INTRODUCTION

Public/Private Ventures' National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth is coming of age at a time when great interest has been generated in the role that faith-based organizations can play in addressing the nation's social problems. In recent years, both the federal government and the foundation community have been interested in the possibility of collaborating with faith-based institutions for the benefit of the low-income communities in which they reside. In fact, the federal government, through the Charitable Choice provision of the 1996 welfare reform law, extended to all faith-based organizations the right to compete for government funding of their service programs without requiring that their operations be entirely secularized. The foundation community has also become active in this area, launching a number of initiatives that explore the role that faith-based institutions can play in the provision of social services.[1]

In spite of this interest and activity, not much is known about what happens when faith-based organizations move into the realm of social programming. The National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth—which is national in scope and combines program operations, technical assistance and evaluation—is structured to examine this issue.

BACKGROUND

As early as 1996, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) had become intrigued with the possibility that faith-based organizations could help youth who have been

involved in criminal activity. Part of this interest stemmed from a concern that few people were creatively thinking about the problems of such youth. Indeed, in recent years, juvenile crime policy has become increasingly punitive—opting to treat juveniles as adults and meting out long periods of incarceration. Neither the public nor the private sector really focused on supporting the programs or activities that might prevent youth from becoming involved in juvenile crime or on constructively dealing with those who already had become involved.

Our interest in the role that churches could play in addressing this issue had, at its roots, a number of observations about the assets and potential of the faith community. The most important of these has to do with location—simply being there. While many social service organizations and institutions have left the most distressed low-income communities, churches remain a significant presence, one with assets that may include buildings that can be used for a variety of social initiatives, volunteers and a tradition of outreach and service.[2]

Moreover, research on the relationship between religiosity and crime seemed encouraging. Some studies have found a strong negative relationship between religion and delinquency. One study, for instance, reported that churchgoing, independent of other factors, made young black males from high-poverty neighborhoods substantially more likely to escape poverty, crime and other social ills.[3] While these findings have not gone uncontested (other studies have found only a weak or insignificant effect of religiosity on delinquency), many program designers and policymakers consider the positive findings promising enough to proceed cautiously with a test of the effect on youth violence and delinquency of exposing troubled youth to faith-based programming.

Beyond the "being there" and the research findings, however, we wanted to examine the role the faith community had played in such events as the "Boston Miracle," the phrase that came to describe that city's dramatic turnaround in rates of violent juvenile crime, which during the late 1980s and early 1990s had spiraled out of control. By the mid-1990s, juvenile violence had been radically reduced, and for nearly two years no one under the age of 17 had been killed by gunfire.

This dramatic reduction in crime has frequently been credited to the collaboration of various organizations, including the Boston Police Department, the Probation Department, several other youth-focused city agencies and African-American religious groups. The religious groups had been united by Reverend Eugene Rivers, pastor of the Azusa Christian Community in Dorchester, an area that had been plagued by high rates of violent juvenile crime. Seeing the need ,

to take the church into the streets to address the concerns of the surrounding communities, Reverend Rivers organized the Boston Ten Point Coalition, a broad-based ministry that included evangelizing gang members, patrolling the streets, standing with youth at their probation hearings and offering them a range of services to support their quest for education, employment and a life free of crime.

From the beginning, collaboration with law enforcement was a hallmark of the Ten Point Coalition. Convinced that most of the serious crimes were being committed by a small number of youth, the Ten Point Coalition worked with law enforcement to identify and remove the most violent offenders while advocating for alternative or reduced sentences for youth who deserved a second chance and could benefit from supportive services and positive adult relationships.

Impressed with the Boston experience, P/PV began an extensive reconnaissance to determine whether other faith-based organizations were willing to partner with the justice community in working with high-risk youth. In 1997, P/PV hosted a meeting of about 40 religious leaders from across the country who were already focusing on how faith-based organizations could use their resources to help low-income communities. The reconnaissance also included site visits to nearly two dozen cities. In each city, staff members met with religious leaders and representatives of the juvenile justice and law enforcement communities, as well as representatives from community-based organizations, public education and foundations. They also visited organizations that had faith-based social service programs already under way to get a sense of their promise and the challenges they had encountered.

This early reconnaissance indicated that few organizations were operating programs of the kind anticipated for the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth—systematic programs that involved faith-based organizations and the justice community collaborating on behalf of high-risk youth. Even when these organizations had a strong interest in working with such youth, they did not have a strong experience base for an undertaking of this scope.

It was clear that many of the organizations that would participate in the initiative would be starting from scratch with respect to such tasks as building relationships with the justice community and service providers; recruiting volunteers; recruiting the participant group; and putting in place and monitoring the supports, services and activities appropriate for high-risk youth. Working with these sites would be time consuming and would require a variety of incentives and stimuli, including information, funding and technical assistance.

After synthesizing the results of these efforts, P/PV decided to undertake a demonstration project that could provide more comprehensive information about the potential of faith-based organizations as a means of working with high-risk youth.

The National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth

P/PV designed a program that drew on key aspects of the Boston experience. Faith-based institutions would be partnered with juvenile justice agencies to work with high-risk youth to reduce recidivism and improve their educational and employment outcomes. Over the next several years, P/PV staff identified 15 organizations that agreed to participate in the demonstration project. Some were identified early and began participating in 1998. Others were identified later and have relatively recently begun operation. All the sites, however, agreed to implement programs consistent with guidelines that had been promulgated by P/PV to provide a degree of structure to their efforts, while also allowing for creativity and the possible emergence of distinctive approaches. The following guidelines sought to achieve this balance. Two of them address central programmatic elements:

1. **A focus on high-risk youth.** Sites agreed to target youth already involved in criminal or violent activities, or who have been deemed likely candidates for such behavior.

2. **Appropriate programming.** Each site agreed to develop programs specifically targeted to high-risk youth and that include one or more of the following content areas: mentoring, education and employment readiness.

The other two features address the organizational elements considered necessary for implementing the project at each site. They focus on two kinds of partnerships:

3. **Partnerships among faith-based institutions.** Sites were encouraged to include congregations from different faiths and denominations as partners. They were also expected to include small- to mid-sized churches that were physically located in the target community and drew a significant percentage of their membership from community residents.

4. **Partnerships with the justice community.** To strengthen efforts to identify, recruit and serve high-risk youth, each site agreed to develop partnerships with juvenile justice or law enforcement agencies, or both.

The sites were also encouraged to develop partnerships with social service agencies and other public and nonprofit organizations, including schools that serve high-risk youth. The primary purposes of these partnerships were to provide programming for the high-risk youth and training for staff and volunteers. In addition, school partners might also refer youth who could benefit from participation in the initiative.

The complex needs of youth involved in the juvenile justice system may require the best efforts of all these partners: the relational support provided by pastors, congregational members and community residents; the services—including education, job training and life-skills instruction—that social service organizations can provide; and the alternative sentencing options that the justice community can provide.

While the sites were expected to design programs responsive to these guidelines, P/PV was also interested in the issue of the capacity of faith-based organizations to work with high-risk youth. Rather than take a heavy-handed approach to the issue of fidelity to any given model, P/PV considered it much more important to use this initiative as an opportunity to observe how these organizations would use their own insights and capacities to create programs appropriate for this target population. P/PV thus provided technical assistance and support to all participating organizations—those that closely conformed to the model as well as those whose programs ranged farther afield.

The Sites

The demonstration project began operations in late 1998 at seven of the current sites: Bronx, Cleveland, Denver, Oakland, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Seattle. Brooklyn, Indianapolis and Los Angeles joined in early 2000, while Baton Rouge, Detroit, Fresno, Tulsa and Washington, D.C., were added later that year.

Table 1 lists the 15 sites[4] now participating in the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth and presents some of their characteristics. The text boxes feature the programs that served as intensive research sites for this study.

Table 1:
Sites and Partnerships in the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth

Site Location/ Name of Program	Type of Lead Agency/ Name of Lead Agency	Number of Active Congregational Partners	Primary Justice Partners*	Initiative Funding**
Baton Rouge, LA Baton Rouge Walk-Of-Faith Collaboration	Beech Grove Baptist Church	8	Court/probation	$100,000
Bronx, NY BronxConnect	Urban Youth Alliance International	24	Court/probation	$100,000
Brooklyn, NY*** Youth and Congregations in Partnership	Kings County District Attorney's Office	59	Court/probation; PD	$ 65,000
Cleveland, OH Project Restoration	Clergy United for Juvenile Justice	4	Police; court/ probation; detention; DA; PD	$150,000
Denver, CO Isaiah Project	Metro Denver Black Church Initiative	2	Court/probation; detention; DA	$100,000
Detroit, MI High-Risk Empower Initiative	Rosedale Park Baptist Church	1	Detention; DA	$100,000
Fresno, CA One By One High-Risk Youth Mentoring Initiative	Fresno Leadership Foundation	4	Court/probation	$100,000
Indianapolis, IN Indianapolis Ten Point Coalition	Indianapolis Ten Point Coalition	9	Police; court/ probation; detention; DA; PD	$200,000

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Site Location/ Name of Program	Type of Lead Agency/ Name of Lead Agency	Number of Active Congregational Partners	Primary Justice Partners*	Initiative Funding**
Los Angeles, CA Los Angeles GED Initiative	Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches	4	Court/probation; DA; PD	$ 75,000
Oakland, CA Building Equity, Discipline and Respect for Our Community (BEDROC)	Westside Economic Development Corporation	4	Police; court/ probation	$100,000
Philadelphia, PA Southwest Youth and Family Network of Philadelphia	African American Interdenominational Ministries	10	Police; court/probation; detention; PD	$200,000
San Francisco, CA Spiritual Life Program	San Francisco Interfaith Council	1	Court/probation; detention	$100,000
Seattle, WA JOY! Initiative	Church Council of Greater Seattle	3	Court/probation; detention	$100,000
Tulsa, OK Tulsa Ten Point Coalition	Tulsa Ten Point Coalition	9	Police; court/probation	$100,000
Washington, DC East of the River Clergy, Police, Community Partnership	East of the River Clergy, Police, Community Partnership	3	Police; court/probation	$100,000

* Justice partners include police departments; juvenile courts and their probation departments (courts/probation); juvenile detention facilities (detention); district attorney's offices (DA); and public defender's offices (PD).

** Refers to funds made available through P/PV only for the period between September 1, 2000 and August 31, 2001. Sites were encouraged to seek additional funding.

*** This program's variation on the basic model—one in which the juvenile justice entity takes the lead in the partnership with the faith-based organization—will be featured in a forthcoming case study. It will also be an intensive research site in future research and data collection efforts.

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As can be seen from the first column, the sites are geographically diverse, representing most areas of the country: the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic (Bronx, Brooklyn, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.), the South (Baton Rouge and Tulsa), the Midwest (Cleveland, Detroit and Indianapolis), the Rocky Mountain states (Denver), and the West Coast (Fresno, Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco and Seattle).

The second column identifies the lead agencies. At each site, a lead agency is responsible for planning and managing the initiative. These lead agencies range widely in theological orientation, organizational structure and age (the oldest, in Seattle, was established in 1919; the youngest, in Indianapolis and Washington, D.C., were formed in 1999).

INTENSIVE RESEARCH SITE

Project Restoration

Project Restoration, the high-risk youth initiative in Cleveland, provides mentoring, tutoring, training in conflict resolution and other services to youth enrolled in the program.

The sites' lead agency, Clergy United for Juvenile Justice (CUJJ), is a collaborative of faith-based organizations that grew from a shared concern among clergy about the high rate of juvenile crime in their areas of the city.

In 1997, as a step toward addressing this concern, the chaplain of the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center convened a meeting with judges in the juvenile court and some 50 members of the clergy. Out of this meeting came the idea of a partnership between justice agencies and clergy to address juvenile crime. Three of the major ministerial associations in the area, representing between 200 and 300 congregations, sent representatives to serve on the planning committee for what ultimately became CUJJ.

CUJJ, whose staff includes both Christians and Muslims, has created a program whose strongest features are the sound relationships that staff and volunteers form with participants, and the safe haven that it provides for them.

Two are individual churches and one, Brooklyn, is unique in that its lead agency is the District Attorney's Office: its program recruits volunteer mentors from faith-based organizations throughout Brooklyn. The remaining sites are all faith-based organizations that typically represent a group of congregations. Some

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have a multi-issue agenda, while others, particularly the newer organizations, were created for the purpose of serving high-risk youth.

Although some of the more established organizations had not previously worked with their member churches specifically on the issue of high-risk youth before joining the demonstration project, they all believed this focus could fit comfortably within their missions.[5]

Although these lead organizations vary greatly in mission, membership, organizational structure and age (and have been categorized using a variety of terms, such as collaboratives, partnerships or intermediaries), we found that relatively few of these variables had any predictive value for the quality of program implementation observed during the study period. As discussed in Chapter III, the number of years the organization had been in existence, whether it was a single purpose or multi-purpose organization, and whether there was differentiation in staff responsibilities for programmatic and organizational functions seemed to have the greatest explanatory power.

INTENSIVE RESEARCH SITE

The Indianapolis Ten Point Coalition

The Indianapolis Ten Point Coalition (ITPC) is one of the sites that models itself after the Boston Ten Point Coalition (the others are in Tulsa and Washington, D.C.). ITPC divides its resources between two distinct forms of programming. For participants who formally enroll in its programs, it provides mentoring, and life skills and employability training. ITPC staff and volunteers also devote considerable time reaching out to community residents who are not officially enrolled in these programs. One of the ways they do this is through Friday-night walks, where pastors and volunteers from the collaborating churches walk the streets of the neighborhoods served by the initiative—calming tensions, offering on-the-spot counseling and referrals to services. ITPC's Court Advocacy staff also offers its services to young people encountered in the neighborhoods, detention centers and the courts.

ITPC received its early support from Stephen Goldsmith, then the city's mayor, whose administration encouraged community and faith-based involvement in the delivery of social services. A local pastor subsequently took the lead in organizing the Ten Point Coalition by bringing together congregations and justice partners to address the particular issues of high-risk youth in low-income areas of the city.

ITPC collaborates with an extensive group of juvenile justice partners, including city, county and state police; the courts; probation; and the Indianapolis Violence Reduction Project.

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The lead agencies' major initial responsibility was to develop the partnerships considered essential for implementing effective programs for high-risk youth. The third column identifies the number of active congregational partners—churches (and at two sites, Muslim and Jewish congregations) that provide volunteers, facilities, leadership and other resources for the initiative.[6] The fourth column lists the agencies and offices that are the primary justice partners at each site. The final column indicates the grant that each site received for participation in this initiative.

The Focus of the Report

The evaluation of the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth is intended to provide documentation of the efforts of the sites as they work to develop partnerships with congregations and the justice community and implement their programs for high-risk youth. It addresses four broad questions:

- What factors contribute to the formation of effective partnerships within the faith community, and between that community and the justice system?
- Will faith-based organizations be effective in recruiting high-risk youth to their programs?
- Can faith-based organizations successfully implement sound programs that meet the needs of these high-risk youth?
- What role does faith play in the design and implementation of these programs?

The first of these questions is addressed in a companion report, *Collaborating for High-Risk Youth: Faith and Justice Partnerships*. The following pages examine the other issues—recruitment, program implementation and the role of faith—as they manifested themselves during the early phases of the initiative.

Because the sites are still at an early stage in both their organizational development and their ability to implement programs for high-risk youth, we have decided to address the key questions of outcomes and costs in future reports on this initiative's progress—once program operations are stabilized in a subset of the sites.

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Study Methodology

Our evaluation methodology combines cross-site and case study approaches. Two techniques were used to collect data across all of the participating sites. The first of these is information collected by members of P/PV's operations staff, who made regular site visits to document program activities and provide technical assistance. These visits were an important source of data for research purposes and for program monitoring. Operations staff also completed quarterly reports that addressed the initiative's key research questions. The reports, which follow a format designed in collaboration with the research staff, addressed questions uniformly so that information could be aggregated across sites. P/PV also designed a management information system (MIS) that sites use to report on key program activities, including participant enrollment and characteristics, the amount of contact that occurs between the program and participants, program attrition rates, and the attainment of program benchmarks.

INTENSIVE RESEARCH SITE

The Los Angeles GED Initiative

Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches (LAM), the initiative's lead agency in that city, heads a network of more than 40 African-American churches and uses a grassroots, community-organizing approach to involve these congregations in working toward community change.

Several years ago, LAM and its congregational network successfully lobbied the California legislature to enact a pilot project that authorizes the courts to require individuals who have been convicted of a non-violent offense (and have not earned a high school diploma and are not currently in school) to participate in a GED program as a condition of probation. The intention of the pilot project is to demonstrate that community-based support and educational opportunities can return ex-offenders to the community as productive and socially engaged citizens.

In implementing the GED Initiative, LAM collaborates with a GED Working Group that includes representatives of the District Attorney's Office, the Probation Department, the Public Defenders' Office, the Los Angeles Unified School District and California State University, Los Angeles.

LAM began offering its first GED classes in Fall 2000.

In addition to cross-site data collection, the evaluation more closely focuses on the four sites where, in early 2001, a collaboration between the faith and justice communities was already in place, the faith-based organizations' commitment to serving youth with juvenile justice involvement appeared strong, and the program was already serving or soon to start serving youth. These sites—Cleveland, Denver, Indianapolis and Los Angeles—were designated as intensive research sites. At each of these, members of the research staff supplemented the cross-site data collection with two site visits between August 2000 and March 2001, during which they interviewed key actors in both the juvenile justice and faith communities, observed program activities, shadowed key staff and interviewed participants. These sites have been briefly described in the boxed text in this chapter.

Structure of the Report

This report documents the efforts of sites as they worked to complete several critical implementation tasks. Each site was expected to recruit a group of youth who had contact with the juvenile justice system or were considered at high risk of doing so. Chapter II examines the characteristics of the young people who have participated in the programs and the sources through which they were recruited. It also describes some of the variables that influenced whether the sites succeeded in attracting the desired target population.

Within the parameters established by the demonstration guidelines, sites had to make important decisions about service delivery. Their primary charge was to implement a set of program activities appropriate for high-risk youth. Each site had to decide which of those activities, and what additional services, it would offer either directly or through referral to other organizations. Chapter III provides an overview of the activities delivered across the sites and discusses some of the issues and challenges that arose from their efforts.

The lead agencies and program staff also had to make critical decisions about the role that faith would play in their program design and service delivery—and to do so in a manner that was both true to their identities as faith-based organizations and consistent with restrictions on the use of public funding for religious purposes. Chapter IV explores some of the ways in which the sites reconciled these sometimes conflicting demands. The final chapter draws together information from the report and offers some conclusions about the sites' early implementation efforts.

INTENSIVE RESEARCH SITE

The Isaiah Project

During the early phases of the initiative, the lead agency in Denver was the Metro Denver Black Church Initiative (MDBCI). An intermediary organization that works to build the overall capacity of local congregations to play a more substantial role in addressing social issues of poverty, crime, poor health and unemployment, MDBCI has a membership of more than 40 churches.

The leadership of MDBCI has strong ties to the juvenile justice system, having served on a number of state-level boards and organizations within the parole and probation systems.

Its high-risk youth program, the Isaiah Project, is operated through two local churches that provide participants with mentoring, tutoring and training in conflict management. One of the programs works exclusively with adolescent girls in a number of settings—middle schools, the church and a youth detention center. The other works exclusively with adolescent males, offering them a multi-faceted program that includes group mentoring by male members of the church.

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Recruiting Participants

The National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth was designed to reach a population faced with particular challenges—young people who have committed juvenile or criminal offenses, or are considered to be at great risk of doing so.

This chapter examines findings on key research questions about sites' recruitment efforts:

- What are the characteristics of the youth participating in the initiative? Were sites able to enroll the desired target population?
- How were participants recruited or referred to the program? To what extent have the partnerships with the justice system resulted in referrals of youth involved with the juvenile courts?
- What factors seemed to influence whether a site's justice partners were willing to make a substantial number of referrals to the program?

The discussion focuses on those young people who participated in the program between January and August 2001. Included are participants who had previously enrolled and were still participating, as well as those who began their participation during this period. Any youth who had begun and ended their participation before 2001 were not included in these data.

January 2001 was a propitious point to begin this kind of data collection.[7] Sites had, for the most part, developed their partnerships and finalized their arrangements for service delivery. They were ready to take on the task of serving participants.

Who Are the Youth?

Table 2 presents data on the characteristics of 494 participants who took part in the 13 programs that provided reliable participant data.[8] When we look at the aggregate sample, we find that the majority of these participants were African American (88%), male (72%) and, consistent with their mean age of 16, currently enrolled in school (79%). Only a small number (13%) were employed, either full time or part time. The primary group served in this initiative was young African-American males, which is precisely the group that has been shown in previous research to be positively influenced by religious affiliation.[9]

The participant characteristics presented in Table 2 give further evidence of the sites' success in meeting the demonstration's requirements that they work with a group of high-risk youth who were either already involved in criminal or violent behavior or who were deemed likely candidates for such behavior.

Of the total sample, 60 percent had been arrested at least once. A similar number (63%) acknowledged having committed a crime or juvenile offense, though they may or may not have been arrested for it. Crimes against persons—including assault, robbery and rape—were the most common of these offenses. Forty-five percent of these participants had committed such a crime. Thirty-six percent had committed such juvenile status offenses as truancy, curfew violations and running away from home, while another 32 percent had committed such property crimes as burglary, arson and theft. An additional 26 percent had committed drug offenses, and 19 percent had committed such public order offenses as drunkenness and disorderly conduct.

Along with their actual offenses, these youth exhibit a wide range of risk behaviors and characteristics that have been shown to be strongly associated with delinquency. For instance, when we examined the school behaviors of youth who were enrolled in school while participating in the program, we found that 61 percent of them had been suspended from school at least once; 51 percent had poor grades; 41 percent had repeated a grade; and 38 percent regularly exhibited such disciplinary problems as troublemaking, fighting and rule breaking.

Table 2:
Selected Characteristics of Participants at Intake

Participant Characteristic	All Sites
Age	
% under 18	73
Mean age (years)	16.6
Gender (%)	
Male	72
Female	28
Race (%)	
African American	88
Latino	5
White	3
Other	4
Currently Enrolled in School (%)	79
Employed, Part Time or Full Time (%)	13
Number of Times Arrested (%)	
Never	40
Once	29
Twice	13
Three times or more	18
Ever Committed a Juvenile or Criminal Offense (%)	63
Offense Committed (%)*	
Crimes against persons	45
Juvenile status offenses	36
Property offenses	32
Drug law offense	26
Public order offenses	19
School Risk Factors (%)*	
Ever suspended from school	61
Poor grades	51
Ever repeated a grade	41
Behavior problems (troublemaking, fighting, rule breaking)	38
Skips classes frequently	28
Frequently truant	19
Ever expelled from school	17
Lives in a Single-Parent Household (%)	62
Has Low Self-Esteem (%)**	57
Associates with Peers Involved in Criminal Behavior (%)**	52
Adults with Whom Participant Discusses Personal Issues (%)	
Immediate family members	59
Extended family members	21
Teachers	10
Others	15
Total Number Enrolled	494

* The total exceeds 100 percent because multiple responses are possible.

** Refers to participants 18 years old and younger.

Source: Tabulations of intake data collected with the National Faith-Based Initiative Management Information Systems. The data cover all youth participating during the period of January to August 2001 in the following sites: Baton Rouge, Bronx, Brooklyn, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Oakland (California), Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, Tulsa, and Washington, D.C.

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Amid the family risk behaviors we examined, the one found among the largest number of participants (62%) was living in a household headed by a single parent. When we examined individual characteristics of participants aged 18 and under, we found that low self-esteem and association with peers involved in criminal behavior, at 57 percent and 52 percent, respectively, were prevalent in this population. The latter factor is of considerable concern. Research shows that negative peer influence is one of the most potent factors contributing to juvenile crime.[10]

Despite participants' substantial risk factors, many of these young people also have assets that the faith-based programs can build on and strengthen. Intake data indicate that a majority of participants expressed interest in such youth development activities as sports and the performing arts, activities that can serve as a point of entry for programming and for the formation of adult-youth relationships. The sites have generally recognized that it is recreation and cultural enrichment activities that initially attract young people to their programs and provide the opportunity for more serious input.

The fact that this participant profile includes assets and productive interests, as well as serious risk behaviors, is not unusual. Research has shown that youth with multiple risk factors almost always simultaneously engage in such positive behaviors as spending time with parents, participating in extracurricular activities and sometimes earning good grades. An Urban Institute study, for example, showed that students who had been involved in multiple risk behaviors, including violent behaviors of the kind common to youth in this initiative, are nevertheless also involved in at least one of the following activities: team sports, school clubs, youth groups and paid employment. Participation in faith-based organizations, especially in religious youth groups, was found to be quite common for multiple-risk youth who are African American. The Urban Institute study concluded that it is important to offer services and activities that build on and reinforce youth's involvement in such positive activities and strengthen their relationships with positive adult role models.[11]

How Are High-Risk Youth Referred to the Program?

Participants came into the faith-based programs through a wide variety of channels, as Table 3 shows. Small numbers of participants came to the initiative through such sources as parents, guardians and relatives (11%), church members (7%) and self-referral (9%). The three most common referral sources, however, were the justice system (29%), the schools (27%) and direct outreach (26%). The school referrals often came as a result of strong relationships developed between the faith-based organizations and one or more schools located in the neighborhoods they served. Staff outreach to individuals and organizations within these communities was also a good source of participants.

As important as these referral sources are, the model for the initiative was based on the relationship with the justice system and the referrals that it could provide. In spite of the faith-based organizations' well-developed partnerships with the justice community, however, fewer than a third of participants (29%) came to the program as a result of referrals from the sites' justice partners, including police departments, probation departments, juvenile detention facilities, district attorneys' offices, public defenders, parole officers, diversionary programs and the courts.

Table 3:
Sources of Participant Referrals

Referral Source	Percentage of Participants Referred*
Justice system	29
Schools	27
Direct outreach	26
Parents, guardians, relatives	11
Self	9
Church members	7

* The total exceeds 100 percent because multiple responses are possible.

Source: Tabulations of intake data collected with the National Faith-Based Initiative Management Information Systems. The data cover all participants enrolled in the 13 sites, providing reliable data for the period between January and August 2001.

This finding is of concern because the sites can only call on the considerable resources of the juvenile justice community—whose options include pre-trial release, community service, alternate sentencing or having a record expunged—when they are working with youth who are currently before the bar of justice. These resources cannot be called into play if a site gets the bulk of its participant referrals from non-legal sources.

Two factors seemed key in determining whether a site would receive a substantial number of referrals from the justice system. The first concerns whether the faith-based organization was committed to working with youth currently in trouble with the law, even if such a commitment meant there would be less of an opportunity to work with a broader group of youth. The second concerns the program's responses to the justice community's initial referrals. The sites varied considerably with respect to these factors. The following section examines how the first of these factors played out in the four intensive research sites. The second factor—the confidence of justice partners in the faith-based program—will be discussed in Chapter III.

Referrals and the Question of Commitment

Overall, we found that there was an interactive relationship between a site's commitment to focus on youth at the highest risk for criminal activity and the justice partners' willingness to make substantial referrals to the program. Those sites that early on had confronted the issue of congregations' willingness to work with youth who had been involved in violent or criminal behavior were able to generate a high rate of referrals from the juvenile justice system. When staff, volunteers and participating congregations had significant reservations about whether or how much to work with these youth, the flow of referrals from the justice system was curtailed.

Coming Together to Serve High-Risk Youth

This relationship seems most clear in the Cleveland program, where the lead agency, Clergy United for Juvenile Justice (CUJJ), had been created for the specific purpose of serving youth involved with the justice system. The key figure in establishing CUJJ was the chaplain (and now its executive director) at the

juvenile detention center, who spoke passionately about the plight of the young people he encountered there and his vision of having large numbers of ministers join him in this work.

While the clergy had some initial reservations, they gradually became receptive to the idea of working with this population. They recognized the toll that crime and violence were taking on their communities, and they also recognized that members of their own congregations had children who had been in trouble with the law. They agreed to move forward as long as they could do so collectively and no single congregation would have to undertake the work alone. Ultimately, this shared vision led to the establishment of CUJJ.

Thus, from the beginning, the Cleveland program has worked with a high-risk population of young people, many of whom have been referred by the justice system and are participating in the program as an alternative to incarceration. These are youth who were in the program while on probation for periods of between one and nine months, although many of them continued to participate after their probation was completed.

Similarly, in Indianapolis, the willingness to serve high-risk youth resulted in an early flow of referrals from the justice system. The Indianapolis Ten Point Coalition (ITPC), like Cleveland, had been created for the specific purpose of working with high-risk youth and had relatively minor difficulties getting the pastors of participating congregations to agree to focus on this population. Because of this commitment, ITPC was able to develop a partnership with a judge who initially referred all of the juvenile weapons offenders coming through her court to ITPC for mentoring.

Keeping Partners Focused on the Target Population

In Los Angeles, the lead agency, Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches (LAM), was strongly committed to working with young adults whose criminal behavior was having a negative impact on the quality of life in its constituent communities. As a result, it chose to deal directly with the fact that congregational members might be afraid to work with these young people who had committed crimes. LAM addressed this issue in its early orientation sessions with member congregations, using passages from the Bible to point out that it is the legitimate mission of the church to work outside the confines of the church walls. LAM

also reminded the pastors of participating churches that most of them were already working with ex-offenders; many of them had members of their churches who had turned away from a life of crime and were now living a new life.

Though its commitment to high-risk young adults was strong, LAM needed to work as diligently with its justice partners as it had with its participating congregations to increase the probability of a steady flow of referrals from the justice system. The intended target population for its GED program was young adults without a high school diploma who had committed crimes considered non-serious and non-violent. However, the District Attorney's Office was interested in limiting participation to young adults who had committed certain offenses that were considered "wobblers"—offenses that could be charged as either misdemeanors or felonies at the discretion of the district attorney. LAM, on the other hand, wanted to work with the young people who were committing more serious offenses. Few of the wobbler offenses—tax evasion or check fraud, for instance—were common in LAM's communities. Moreover, it was subsequently discovered that focusing on these offenses would seriously reduce the size of the pool from which participants could be drawn.

LAM, the District Attorney's Office and the Public Defender's Office eventually agreed on an expanded list of acceptable offenses. It included some serious but non-violent crimes, such as burglary, drug offenses, petty theft and car burglary. To increase the size of the pool, the Los Angeles County's supervising judge brokered a meeting at which LAM representatives met with between 50 and 60 judges to inform them about the GED program. In addition, it was agreed that LAM could receive referrals directly from the Public Defender's Office when the young person was in the investigatory or pre-trial stage.

Opting for a More Inclusive Strategy

The relationship between the commitment to serve high-risk youth and the ability to generate referrals from the justice system was more complicated in the Denver program. There, the lead agency was the Metro Denver Black Church Initiative, which had used a Request for Proposal process to select five of its member churches for participation in that site's demonstration, which it called the Isaiah Project.

Unlike the other intensive research sites, there was a debate in Denver among program staff and leaders of the participating congregations about the importance of focusing exclusively on high-risk youth. Consistent with a broad-based

ministry familiar to many faith-based organizations, a number of leaders and staff felt they should work with all youth, not just those involved with the justice system. They preferred a more inclusive strategy, expressing the belief that the program should serve the high-risk, the at-risk and the "at-risk of becoming at-risk." Moreover, according to program staff, not all of the participating churches were comfortable serving young people who had committed multiple misdemeanors or felonies.

In the wake of these concerns, the decision was made to re-focus the Isaiah Project on the churches that showed the greatest willingness to work with high-risk youth—the Grace and Truth Full Gospel Pentecostal Church and the True Light Baptist Church—and withdraw three other congregations from participation. While the two remaining congregations were indeed willing to work with high-risk youth, they did not focus on them exclusively but continued to serve a more general population.

This reluctance to focus on high-risk youth had a complicated impact on the flow of referrals from the justice system. According to the site's initial plan, participants could come to the Isaiah Project through the detention center's pre-trial release program or through one of several diversion programs for youth who had violated city or state statutes. However, the participating churches recruited large numbers of youth through referrals from schools, parents and their own congregations.

One juvenile justice source expressed the concern that, because of referrals from these other sources, there were not enough slots in the program to absorb the numbers of participants that could be referred by the justice system. However, some at the site maintained that their non-justice recruitment efforts were in response to a slow rate of referrals from justice agencies. Either way, it appears that thus far there has been an underutilization of a highly developed partnership with the juvenile justice community that seems at least partially related to concerns about the extent to which the program should focus or is focusing on high-risk youth.

Summary

While fewer than a third of participants were referred by the sites' justice partners and, thus, were currently involved with the juvenile justice system, the faith-based programs successfully recruited a high percentage of youth with significant risk factors. More than 60 percent had committed crimes or status

offenses, and many had done so multiple times. Most also had serious academic and in-school behavioral problems associated with dropping out before graduation. And while a large percentage of the youth had important assets (in particular, an adult in whom they felt comfortable confiding), a majority also had low self-esteem and associated with peers who engaged in criminal behavior.

These then are the youth who came to the faith-based programs. The following chapter describes the services and supports that those programs offered in response.

Delivering Appropriate Services and Supports

Since faith-based institutions are one of the few types of institutions that maintain a presence in troubled urban communities, their ability to develop and implement social programs that address the problems challenging local residents is of great interest. This chapter discusses the sites' experiences in implementing programming for high-risk youth in their communities. It explores the following questions:

- What services were actually delivered? To what extent have the sites been able to meet the initiative's guidelines of providing mentoring, education and employment-readiness services?
- What factors influenced sites' decisions concerning which services to offer?
- To what extent were their choices consistent with current theory and research on effective interventions for high-risk youth?

The chapter also examines some of the challenges the sites faced in developing and implementing their service-delivery strategies, and delineates some of the factors that contributed to those challenges.

Service Delivery Across the Sites

Many of the organizations in the initiative use two distinct modes of serving their communities: core programs for enrolled participants and a range of

extended services that are offered occasionally to people who are not formally enrolled in the program. Some of these extended services benefit individuals who use them on an as-needed basis, while others are meant to have an impact on an entire community.

Core Programs for Enrolled Participants

In this section, we describe the services and activities offered to participants who were formally enrolled in these programs (see Table 4), including mentoring, education, employment, life skills, and cultural enrichment and recreation—services and opportunities that are among a number of approaches considered to hold promise for preventing chronic delinquency and crime.[12] Not all of these services were provided directly by the sites themselves. Some were offered to participants through referrals to other providers, which were typically social service organizations that partnered with the faith-based institutions in support of this project.

Three-on-One Mentoring

In Brooklyn, where the District Attorney's Office is the lead agency, the majority of program participants are youth who have been charged with felonies. Because of its desire to provide these young people with intensive mentoring, the office developed a program called Youth Congregations in Partnership that calls for three adult mentors to be matched with each youth.

Mentors are recruited, screened and trained by the District Attorney's Office. They give the program a one-year commitment, during which they work to develop stable, nurturing relationships with the youth and support both the youth and his or her family in their efforts to improve the child's life.

Since the program's inception, more than 200 volunteers from almost 60 of Brooklyn's churches, synagogues and mosques have become involved as mentors.

Table 4:
Primary Core Programming by Site

Site	Mentoring	GED Referrals	Tutoring/ Homework Assistance	Employment-Related Services	Life Skills	Recreation and Cultural Enrichment
Baton Rouge	•	•	•	•		
Bronx	•	•		•	•	•
Brooklyn	•	•	•	•	•	•
Cleveland	•		•	•	•	•
Denver						
Grace and Truth Full Gospel Pentecostal Church			•		•	•
True Light Baptist Church	•		•		•	•
Detroit	•		•			
Fresno*						
Indianapolis	•	•		•	•	
Los Angeles		•				
Oakland		•		•		•
Philadelphia	•		•	•	•	•
San Francisco**						
Seattle				•	•	
Tulsa			•		•	
Washington, DC***					•	

* The Fresno program had not begun serving participants during the report period.

** The primary program activity in San Francisco during this period was a ministry at the youth detention center.

*** Primary program activities in Washington, D.C., during the period included outreach events and referrals of youth to service providers.

Across the sites, available services include:

1. Mentoring. Eight of the sites currently provide some form of mentoring for their participants. These programs range from group mentoring, in which several adults meet with small groups of youth; to one-on-one mentoring; to an intensive form of mentoring at the Brooklyn site, where three adults are matched with one participant (see sidebar on page 28).

2. Education. Ten of the 15 sites provided participants with some form of educational support. Although educational programming varies widely, two distinct clusters are discernible across the sites: tutoring and homework assistance for participants still enrolled in school, and GED programs for those who are out of school. There are generally two types of tutoring and homework assistance: formal programs offered by a consistent group of instructors following an established schedule and more informal academic assistance available on an irregular or as-needed basis (see sidebar on next page). As a complement to the provision of tutoring and homework assistance, most sites provide access to computers with either formal or informal instruction in their use. With the exception of the Los Angeles site, GED services are generally provided through referrals to outside providers.

3. Employment-Related Services. Seven sites provide some form of employment instruction or refer youth to outside providers for these services. Because of the relatively young age and in-school status of most participants, more programs focus on employability programs than on job placement. Employability includes a wide variety of topics, such as goal setting and career planning, job-search techniques, resume preparation and employment counseling. Of those sites offering job placement, many focus on summer jobs for youth. One site, the Indianapolis Ten Point Coalition, has also provided job referrals for out-of-school youth and adults.

4. Life Skills and Conflict Management. In most youth-serving programs, life-skills training addresses such topics as interpersonal communication, financial management, hygiene, sex education and goal setting. While approximately half of the sites offer training in these and similar skills, they also provide programming that addresses violence reduction and conflict management to help participants learn how to cope with stressful events and confrontations that, if mishandled, could lead to negative outcomes.

Education Programs

Sites developed a variety of approaches to their formal tutoring and homework assistance programs. The Tulsa site, for example, provides this programming four days a week and four hours per session during the school year, using a specially designed curriculum called PACE (Personal Academic Computer Enrichment) that focuses on math, English and science, and includes ongoing work in a computer lab. The program is staffed by volunteer tutors who receive training for their role through the site's partnership with the School of Education at Oral Roberts University.

At another site, the True Light Baptist Church in Denver, tutoring for participants is provided by teachers and honor society students from a high school located across the street from the church. This tutoring, which is available twice a week for two hours per session, is one element in a larger reciprocal relationship between the church and the school, which also includes counseling for students and community service projects.

5. Recreational and Cultural Enrichment. Recreational and cultural enrichment programs represent fun activities for youth. The enrichment activities have included cultural heritage events and trips to museums, art festivals, and participatory art and theater groups. Recreational activities include basketball, baseball, volleyball, soccer, tennis, karate, sports events and, at one site, fishing and golf. Six of the sites had structured programs of recreation and cultural enrichment.

In addition to the activities described, a number of other services are available to program participants, primarily through sites' partners. For example, an alliance with a community health center allows one site to provide physicals, eye examinations and other medical services to its participants. At another site, drug and alcohol counseling are provided by a substance abuse treatment center.

Extended Services

In addition to the direct services to enrolled participants, all but two of the sites also offer some form of extended services, which take them beyond the confines of their program walls and into the detention centers and surrounding communities. Some of these activities are described below:

1. Street Outreach. Following the example of the Boston Ten Point Coalition, three sites—Indianapolis, Tulsa and Washington, D.C.—attempt to

Outreach at Detention Centers

In Denver, the pastor of one of the affiliated churches runs a program called Positive Connections in the city's detention center. The program offers counseling, informal group workshops on life skills, and individual and group prayer.

On arrival at the center, program staff walk through the building, talking with whoever is available and interested. Conversations are informal and often touch on such subjects as upcoming hearings, what residents plan to do when they leave and changes they want to make in their lives. Staff then hold a group discussion on topics that include grooming, self-esteem, motivation, and how to behave in the face of problems and temptations. The program also provides Bible study, and staff often pray with the participants, either individually or in a group.

address neighborhood crime and violence by establishing a presence on the streets of the community. In Indianapolis, for example, a group of pastors, staff and volunteers from churches involved in the Indianapolis Ten Point Coalition take to the streets every Friday evening. Striking out from one of the churches, they walk the neighborhoods, approaching the people they encounter on the street, offering prayer for those who are willing, and telling everyone about the program and its array of services. While the outreach efforts are intended to recruit participants to the program and to provide counseling and solace to the larger community, they have an additional effect as well: site personnel and their law enforcement partners concur that these walks help to diffuse tension and deter crime.

2. Detention Center Outreach. A number of sites provide outreach in juvenile detention centers. In these programs, members of the clergy and volunteers from participating congregations offer counseling and support to incarcerated youth (see sidebar above).

3. Court Advocacy. At many of the sites, staff, volunteers and board members provide advocacy for youth coming into contact with the juvenile justice system by standing with them when their cases are called and speaking on their behalf. While the sites generally engage in court advocacy on an ad-hoc basis, several sites (Cleveland, Indianapolis, Brooklyn and Bronx) have well-developed programs to represent youth offenders in court.

These extended services are valuable activities, though distinct from the formal programs that are offered to enrolled participants. However, little of this activity—street outreach, court advocacy and outreach to youth in detention centers—is reflected in the programs' enrollment numbers, even though staff and volunteers devote significant amounts of their time to this effort. A measure of the importance of these services comes from an examination of MIS data documenting the number of contacts made through outreach. In a typical month (September 2001), staff initiated contact with an average of 20 individuals at each site.

What Shaped the Mix of Services Provided at Each Site?

While describing the services provided across the sites offers one perspective on the initiative's accomplishments to date, what matters to each participating youth are the activities and supports available at his or her particular program. The array of services offered at any given site was influenced by a number of factors, including P/PV's guidelines, which indicated that the sites should provide mentoring, education and employment-related activities. Other factors, such as the resources available in the sites' communities or through their social service partners, also played key roles.

Among the most important influences, however, was the site's own theory of change—its own set of hypotheses, assumptions and judgments about the kinds of input that participants needed in order to change their high-risk behavior. While not all sites had a clearly articulated theory of change, two discernible theories seem nevertheless to have governed their decisions about service delivery.

A Focus on Programmatic Services

The first of these theories could be called "programmatic." Sites espousing a programmatic theory of change are keenly aware of the deficits or barriers that contribute to a youth's becoming involved in juvenile crime. A number of sites have pinpointed lack of education as the critical factor. The Los Angeles program, for example, is built on its leadership's analysis that, in its constituent communities, lack of education is the greatest predictor of involvement in criminal activity. Consistent with this analysis, the lead agency, Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches, designed the GED Initiative for non-violent offenders.

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The Indianapolis Ten Point Coalition espouses a theory of change that involves employment. One of the premises of this program is that the lack of legitimate employment opportunities for young adults is responsible for the high crime rates observed in the communities it serves. Thus, when ITPC staff and volunteers conduct their Friday-night outreach activities offering hope and help, the help is usually an employment-related service. An employment program for older, out-of-school participants is the centerpiece of the service delivery strategy at ITPC.

Some general research supports this programmatic theory of change. Findings reviewed in the National Research Council's compendium on juvenile crime and juvenile justice support the notion of an association between poor educational outcomes and the tendency to engage in juvenile crime.[13] The review found that delinquency is associated with poor school performance, truancy and leaving school at an early age. This problem is exacerbated by such school policies as grade retention, suspension and expulsion—policies that may encourage youth to drop out of school.

The research reviewed also suggested that young people who lack an education have limited opportunities to earn money in legitimate jobs and are therefore at risk for participation in criminal activities. Significantly, an evaluation of the Job Corps program, which provides GED instruction and job training for youth who have dropped out of school, has demonstrated that short-term reduction in arrests, incarceration and conviction can be achieved through program intervention using education and employment.[14]

A Focus on Relationships

The second of these theories of change could be called "relational." Sites adopting this theory sometimes provide such basic program components as education, employment and life-skills instruction. However, their service delivery strategy is based on the premise that what participants need most to turn away from negative behavior is relational support. Their primary goal then is to create a program that provides a safe haven where participants are surrounded by caring adults and peers who will support them in the decision to change their behavior.

The research literature on mentoring and after-school programming provides some basis for this approach. For example, P/PV's evaluation of Big Brothers Big

Sisters found that participation in a well-structured mentoring program significantly reduced aggressive behavior and delayed the initiation of drug and alcohol use.[15] While these findings are promising, it is not clear that they can be easily extrapolated to the participants in this initiative. Though the participants in the Big Brothers Big Sisters study had multiple risks (they came from single-parent households, many of which were dependent on public assistance), they were, on average, younger than the participants in this initiative and did not have the same degree of involvement with the legal system. In addition, the National Research Council's review of research did not find an overall impact on this high-risk population from mentoring alone. Instead, it suggested that mentoring was only effective when combined with other treatment elements, including behavior management techniques.[16]

Similarly, research on after-school programs is far from definitive, but it does suggest that the "safe haven" approach taken by some of the sites holds promise. While there have been relatively few evaluations of the effects on delinquent behavior of participation in programs attempting to provide safe havens in the after-school hours, researchers point out that violent offenses by adolescents peak during this time.[17] Moreover, several studies have found that youth spending these hours on their own or in the company of negative peers are more likely to develop behavioral problems.

Research has also cautioned against putting high-risk youth together in these "safe haven" programs, since it may provide them with an opportunity to reinforce each other's negative behavior. Studies have found that combining one or two high-risk youth in groups of adolescents who are not considered high risk leads to a reduction in anti-social behaviors.[18]

Building on a Tradition of Faith

Faith-based organizations, especially those that have not made a commitment to the complete secularization of their operations, may tend to shy away from exclusively formal approaches to programming and lean toward the more relational approach (see Chapter IV for further discussion). This issue has been articulated by several scholars who have written about the prospect of faith-based organizations serving as instruments of social policy. H. Dean Trulear, for example, has noted the complex problems posed when one attempts to marry a social program's need for structure and the religious community's tradition of doing much of its work through informal relationships.[19]

And Amy Sherman, of the Hudson Institute, has stated it this way:

> *It's through real relationships that people feel loved and begin to have hope. It's through real relationships that moral accountability can happen and where the teaching of essential life skills can happen.*
>
> *To be effective, faith-based groups must enfold program participants into a loving, supportive community that legitimates the participant's pursuit of a healthier lifestyle. What I see from the frontlines is that not everyone in the participant's circle is excited about the participant's desire to improve himself or herself...So participants have these people in their circles who are trying to keep them down, and they need an alternative community that is lovingly pulling them up, that's cheerleading their efforts at self-improvement, that is reinforcing that it's good, that it's right, that it's praiseworthy that the participant is trying to change for the better.*[20]

This perspective is not unique to faith-based organizations.[21] However, in these organizations, the youth's "supportive community" might have a different dynamic than in secular youth-serving programs. We believe we have seen this dynamic being played out in the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth in the way that some of the lead organizations have structured their programs and particularly their mentoring components.

Adapting Mentoring Practices

While many of the sites found it challenging to implement standard mentoring programs (see the next section), others seemed to take a different approach to what a faith-based mentoring program should be. Believing that at base what participants need is love, attention and support for the decision to live a different life, staff at these programs believe in the importance of a relatively uncomplicated relational approach to mentoring. Instead of mentoring based on programmatically arranged relationships, they rely on naturally occurring interactions that take place between youth and adults at the program locations. These programs are thus unlikely to have requirements concerning the frequency and length of meetings between mentors and youth that are typical of more traditional approaches to mentoring. Similarly, they do not monitor and supervise the relationships as would a program like Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Cleveland and the True Light Baptist Church in Denver are among the sites that embody a relational approach to mentoring. While Cleveland has a small number of one-to-one matches between youth and staff who serve as mentors,

these formally assigned matches are a relatively minor way in which adult-youth relationships work in this program. The primary source of adult-youth support comes from the naturally occurring, self-initiated relationships that take place.

We found that the Cleveland program has generally succeeded in providing a relationship-rich environment in which youth have an opportunity to connect with any of a number of supportive adults. Participants who were interviewed spoke positively about the adults associated with the program and often named two or three staff members in whom they felt comfortable confiding. One participant, for instance, named both male and female staff with whom he would be willing to talk about "problems, things that happen, private stuff." Another said that he knew all of the program's staff "real good" and named several with whom he would discuss personal information, such as when things were going wrong at home or at school. In addition, several of the participants who had assigned mentors also felt able to confide in other staff members.[22]

The all-male program at True Light Baptist Church in Denver is a second example of a relational approach. Though technically considered a group-mentoring program, it is in practice more akin to a fellowship program in which a small number of men from the sponsoring church join with the participants in all their activities. These men attend group sessions with the participants, work side by side with them on community service projects, accompany them on field trips, attend some professional sports events with them and engage in friendly competition with them in other sports. If there is anything in this program that is as explicit as assignments or matches, it is very fluid. The youth are as likely to be told to engage the adults as the other way around. Throughout it all, the men and youth have conversations about life and how best to navigate it as young black men of faith. Since many of the youth come from female-headed households, the opportunity for significant interaction with positive black men is a valuable opportunity for them.

While we can point out positive aspects of this relational approach, there are downsides as well. First, when the courts make referrals to these programs, many of them do so expecting a more traditional approach to mentoring. In addition, there is the need to make sure that the relatively informal approach these programs take to mentoring does not result in a disappointing experience for participants if, as some of our interviews with participants suggest, the adults are not always available to meet with youth. In more structured programs, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, the procedures for recruitment, screening and supervision combine to increase the likelihood that mentors will continue to meet regularly with their assigned youth.[23]

It is also legitimate to ask whether relational programming is a valid approach that could have a significant impact on participant behavior or whether what we are observing is instead the inability to implement standard youth programming. We will continue to observe this issue as the sites gain more experience and confidence in their approach to serving young people.

Implementation Challenges

While sites were generally successful in putting into place basic program components consistent with the initiative's guidelines, they nevertheless faced a number of challenges that affected their ability to provide these services at a consistently high level throughout the study period and integrate them into a coherent, well-integrated program. In the following sections, we present some of the challenges they encountered and factors that contributed to them.

Mentoring Challenges

Most sites in the initiative experienced some fairly serious challenges in implementing the mentoring components of their programs. A major problem was recruiting volunteers to serve as mentors. Almost all sites were unable to recruit sufficient numbers of volunteers and as a result were not able to make the one-to-one matches called for in their plans. The recruiting difficulties were exacerbated by the fact that many of the sites were seeking a specific group of mentors—men of color and of faith. Research has shown that minority males are the demographic group that mentoring programs have traditionally had the most difficulty recruiting.[24]

As with secular programs, sites found that the difficulty in recruitment was related to the level of commitment that mentoring requires. Organizations in the initiative have generally been capable of mobilizing volunteers for one-time events and more informal assignments. The Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches, for example, has mobilized more than a thousand volunteers for political actions, and the Indianapolis Ten Point Coalition has turned out as many as 30 to 40 volunteers for its Friday-night street outreach. However, the sites have experienced more difficulty generating volunteers for the long-term, intensive commitment that mentoring requires.

Another reason for the difficulty in recruiting mentors for this particular initiative is the target population—high-risk youth who have current juvenile

justice involvement or are considered at risk for some future such involvement. Program operators noted that potential volunteers have been deterred by fear of or discomfort about working with this population. As one project coordinator said, "The kids are using filthy words and are frightening at times."

Given these difficulties, some sites developed group mentoring programs that made the best use of the volunteers they had been able to recruit. At other sites, however, mentoring programs became essentially inactive as they sought new methods of recruitment or considered other ways of providing adult support to their participants.

In addition to recruitment, the sites experienced a number of problems associated with lack of program infrastructure for screening, training, matching and supervising mentors. In fact, some sites that had successfully recruited and even trained volunteer mentors subsequently lost them because of the small number of youth available for assignment to a mentor. While waiting to be assigned a mentee, the volunteers drifted away from the program.

We were also told that some sites made matches that, in the opinion of some of the mentors themselves, did not work because of the age difference between the mentor and the youth. The sites had difficulty detecting these and other problems when they did not have procedures in place for monitoring the matches. As a result, meetings between the mentor and youth would begin to occur less frequently until in some cases they completely stopped.

Because mentoring is an intervention that has been thoroughly studied and codified over the years, sites generally have access to information, training and guidelines that can assist them as they shape this critical component of their program. Indeed, some of the sites did take advantage of these resources and adopted at least some standard mentoring practices. Of the sites implementing one-to-one mentoring programs, a number provided formal training for their mentors, often using materials from such organizations as Big Brothers Big Sisters. Moreover, the programs in Brooklyn and Bronx sent staff members to a 32-hour training program for mentor supervisors.

There were consequences of the absence of a strong mentoring program. Many juvenile justice partners made referrals to the faith-based programs in the belief that participants would receive a strong program intervention with mentoring as its centerpiece. In at least one site, the confidence of the justice partner was seriously shaken when the program was unable to deliver the one-to-one

matches it had promised. As a result, the judge began seeking other programs to which to make referrals—programs that would guarantee having mentors already on hand.

Education and Employment Challenges

At several sites, as previously described, the programmatic approaches to service delivery are oriented around educational and employment opportunities, because the sites identified those as the areas of greatest need for their participants. Our examination of the characteristics of participants enrolled in the initiative revealed serious academic and behavioral problems, including poor grades and fairly high rates of disruptive behavior, truancy, suspensions and expulsions. Problems such as these predict high dropout rates from school, difficulties in the labor market, and increased involvement in crime and violence.

With some noteworthy exceptions, however, the sites have not developed intensive educational interventions that are equal to the academic difficulties that participants exhibit. More typically, they are attempting to deliver a variety of educational supports that supplement the instruction participants are receiving in their schools.

At one site, for example, the education program focuses on homework assistance and a computer access component, while participants' substantial academic needs may require a more intensive educational intervention. This site's education program varies in intensity depending on staff availability. When it had a certified teacher on board who specialized in education for students with learning disabilities, the program developed a fairly intensive educational intervention that included assessments of participants' academic strengths and weaknesses and the development and implementation of an individualized educational instruction plan. However, when that staff member left, the program turned to a less intense after-school homework assistance program.

An additional issue that arose in the implementation of educational programming was participant attendance. Even when sites developed more intensive educational interventions, they did not necessarily have procedures in place to ensure participants' attendance. As a result, participants—especially those who were not mandated to attend by the courts—did not take advantage of the opportunities as much as they could.

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Sites are also still working to provide their employment-readiness components with the necessary breadth and depth. As the school-to-work movement of the 1990s emphasized, a majority of young people leave school and attempt to enter the workforce without adequate training or experience. Thus, programs should provide youth with opportunities to be exposed to features of the workplace and to develop and test their skills on the job under adult supervision. While a few sites have relatively strong employment programs, most typically offer their in-school participants sporadic instruction in completing resumes and job applications, and occasionally invite guest speakers for discussions of careers rather than emphasizing actual experience.

Program operators generally note that, because their participants are young and typically still in school, the programs are stressing education over employment. Yet given the relationship between the lack of employment and crime, this will be an area of focus for P/PV's future technical-assistance efforts.

Organizational and Staffing Challenges

While mentoring, education and employment have posed component-specific implementation challenges, sites also faced other types of programmatic challenges, including maintaining participant attendance levels, integrating the various program components and keeping the program at a steady state. Many of those challenges, as well as the component-specific challenges described above, seem to be the result of the sites' relative inexperience with operating programs and some of the organizational and staffing difficulties resulting from it. Only slightly more than half the lead organizations had existed for more than five years prior to the inception of the initiative, and none had operated programs for high-risk youth for that long.

Staffing challenges particularly seemed to characterize the sites where the program is operated by a lead agency that was specifically created to work with high-risk youth. Those four lead agencies—Cleveland, Indianapolis, Tulsa and Washington, D.C.—were all founded between 1997 and 1999, and, at each of those sites, the program and the organization are virtually the same. Thus, no staff are solely dedicated to the high-risk youth program. Instead, staff time is shared between meeting the needs of that program and of the organization as a whole. As a result, key staff have had to divide their time among several important responsibilities: competing program components, services to enrolled participants and services to the wider community, programmatic and organizational responsibilities, and the existing initiative and plans for its replication or expansion.

These conflicting demands have at times meant that staff with responsibility for several program components have had to concentrate on one to the detriment of others. At one site, for example, the same person was responsible for both the employment and education components of the program. In focusing most of her efforts on employment, the educational component remained underdeveloped. At this site and others, staff have often had to balance the implementation of the core program for enrolled participants and the delivery of a demanding set of extended services, including court advocacy, street outreach and other services to the community. In some cases, there was a division of labor between programmatic and outreach activities, but more often the same individual was responsible for both.

Several sites—including three of the four intensive research sites—were also involved in expanding or replicating their programs while they were working to strengthen program delivery. The Cleveland site, for instance, has been encouraged by its local funder to take an instrumental role in the replication of Project Restoration both within Cleveland and in other nearby counties. While this is a positive development, it has had the effect of siphoning off staff time from ongoing operations.

When there are so many strong and conflicting demands on staff resources, the effectiveness of even the most well-designed program component can be reduced. In addition, staff occasionally found themselves unable to meet the promises they made to participants—for example, to forward their resumes or make the call to the probation officer. When this happened, the program lost some of its hard-won credibility with both participants and partners.

As previously mentioned, many of these problems seem related to the organizations' structure and their relative youth. That is, these problems seemed more commonplace where the high-risk youth program and the organization are virtually synonymous. Where the high-risk youth program was only one of a number of programs for which an older, more-established lead organization had responsibility, adequate resources to support a division of labor between central administrative responsibilities and programmatic tasks were likely to be available. This was the case, for example, in Denver, where program staff were freed from many of the competing demands on their time. The lead agency, the Metro Denver Black Church Initiative, was able to assume responsibility for such central functions as fundraising, liaison with the juvenile justice system and central

intake and to also provide technical assistance to the program. This support allowed staff of the high-risk youth initiative to focus exclusively on programmatic matters.

However, despite these formidable challenges, the sites, with only one exception, were able to get programs up and running relatively quickly. The following chapter looks at the role faith has played in these programs' operations.

The Role of Faith in the Faith-Based Initiative

Much of the controversy about faith-based programming concerns the role of faith and how it might influence the operation of social programs. This chapter addresses that issue as it has occurred in the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth. More specifically, the chapter explores the following questions:

- How and where is the "faith" in faith-based programs manifested? What faith-based practices occur and to what effect? Is the religious freedom of participants protected?
- Are there features of program design that predict more or fewer faith-based practices?
- How does the faith-based nature of these programs affect interactions between participants and staff or volunteers?
- How do participants react to the expressions of faith that occur? Do these expressions of faith appear to have an effect on participants' attitudes and behaviors?

The discussion in the following pages draws on site visit write-ups and quarterly reports for all 15 sites, as well as interviews and observations at the four intensive research sites.

Faith-Based Practices

Rather than create highly secularized programs that are barely distinguishable from those operated by non-religious organizations, most of the sites participating in the initiative have created programs in which faith-based practices play an integral part.

The Role of Prayer

Prayer is perhaps the most commonplace of the faith-based practices to be observed in these programs. One encounters prayer at every level—at meetings, during outreach activities and in interactions with participants.

In Meetings and Other Gatherings

At many of the sites, prayer is a regular part of meetings. In fact, it is highly unlikely that any sizable meeting would begin (or even close) without someone offering a prayer, even when these meetings include secular partners from the justice community or from participating social service agencies. In some cases, where there are interdenominational or interfaith collaboratives, sites have adopted the practice of rotating the prayer offering among the participating denominations to avoid the appearance of a preference for one faith over another. At one interfaith site, for example, sometimes both Christians and Muslims offer a prayer at the beginning of a meeting. Alternatively, one representative says the opening prayer and the other says the closing prayer.

The practice is similar at meals. No meal is begun without offering a prayer or blessing the food, regardless of whether it is partners or participants who are gathering for the meal.

In Outreach Activities

Prayer figures strongly in sites' outreach practices. In one site where delegations from participating churches patrol the neighborhoods in teams, team members participate in a kickoff meeting at the church. Usually present at these meetings are "prayer warriors"—church members who do not participate in the walks but make a contribution by praying for the safety and effectiveness of those that do.

As they walk the neighborhoods, the team members offer up "hope and help." The help comes in the form of a card or flyer that offers assistance to anyone looking for a job. Hope comes in the form of prayer. A team member approaches a person on the street and asks if that person would like the group to pray for him or her. If the person agrees, the group will conduct a prayer on the spot, often responding to the specific prayer requests of the individual.

In Program Sessions

Prayer is often a part of staff interactions with individual participants as well as groups of participants. Several programs conduct prayers at the beginning of workshops and tutoring sessions, and prayer is also commonplace in programs that serve young people being held in detention centers. In both these settings, staff and volunteers pray for participants and, on occasion, encourage participants to pray.

Court dates were times when participants were particularly likely to seek and welcome the prayers of program staff. Participants also sought prayers when conditions were stressful for other reasons. As one program operator said, "They pray when circumstances require it, [for instance] when someone dies or is in the hospital." A participant confirmed this; he said that he prayed only occasionally—when he was scared.

A group prayer in a girls' detention center illustrates a number of these points. At the conclusion of a group meeting largely devoted to motivational issues, the program leader offered a prayer. Before she began, several of the girls stated prayer requests: one girl asked that they pray for her to regain her faith because she felt she had stopped believing; several girls had prayer requests that included their boyfriends; one asked the group to pray for her court trial. Throughout the prayer, many of the girls were in tears. When it was completed, they hugged each other and continued to cry. The group leader told them that it was okay to cry; it showed their hearts were not hardened.

Global Prayer

At one site, there is prayer for the overall success of the program. Staff members send out e-mails asking their supporters to pray for the success of the initiative. They also conduct face-to-face meetings with individuals willing to come in person to pray for the people involved in the program. In addition, they ask their faith-based partners to fast once a week to amplify the effect of their prayers.

Incorporating Religious Concepts into Program Activities

A number of programs have found ways of making the substantive and spiritual contents of their programs more seamless through Bible study and other uses of religious texts, teaching religion as an academic subject and providing exposure to religious music.

Using Religious Texts

Reading or studying sacred texts is part of participants' experiences at a number of the sites. In a detention center for girls, program staff routinely read aloud passages from the Bible, pausing every few verses to extrapolate the meaning of these passages for the girls' lives. This practice of sharing religion with detainees is part of a long-standing tradition in prisons and detention centers.

Another program uses religious texts to help students improve their reading skills. At a third site, participants read from either the Bible or the Koran as part of their group sessions.

Teaching about World Religions

In three sites, religion is taught as an academic subject. The focus is on the variety of religions that exist in the world, and instructors often stress universal concepts that are also religious concepts, such as forgiveness and atonement. One program operator said, "We focus on moral, godly foundations that are universal with all religions." The programs thus avoid proselytizing for a particular denomination or faith.

Engaging Participants in Religious Music

Christian music is often part of the atmosphere at the programs. At one site, participants formed a gospel choir. At another, participants occasionally sing hymns at weekly group meals. At several other programs, Christian music is played in the background when participants go on field trips.

Encouraging Church Attendance

None of the programs have pushed participants to join a church nor have they ever sought to pressure participants who express no interest in religious practices. However, mentors at most sites will occasionally invite their assigned participants to their churches.

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Program Design and Faith-Based Practices

Certain program design features seem associated with whether a given site will be characterized by a high or low salience of faith—that is, whether faith-based practices are pervasive in a program's operations. For example, of the intensive research sites, three (Cleveland, Denver and Indianapolis) are considered to have a high salience of faith because of their adoption of a relatively large number of these practices. The Los Angeles site, where programming focuses on the GED initiative, is considered to have a low salience of faith because, at least at this point in its development, relatively few of these practices are apparent.

Factors such as the role played by a site's secular partners, the setting in which program activities take place, and whether a site is delivering core services or extended-outreach services appear to contribute to the prevalence of faith-based practices in a site's operations. We advance the following observations as hypotheses that explain some, but not all, of the variance in the faith-based practices taking place at the sites. A fuller test of their efficacy can be undertaken at a later point in the sites' development. With these caveats, the following pages explore those factors.

The Role of Secular Partners

Although the initiative focuses on programs in which a faith-based entity takes the lead in a partnership that includes the justice community and social service organizations, there are a number of sites where these secular partners have taken an active role in the actual delivery of services. It is our observation that such programs exhibit fewer of the faith-based practices that we have described above.

In the Brooklyn program, the District Attorney's Office is the lead organization and was responsible for the design and implementation of the program. In this role, it was responsible for recruiting the congregations that provide mentors for high-risk youth. The District Attorney's Office was also responsible for recruiting participants and providing case-management services for them. In the Los Angeles GED program, the Probation Department and the Los Angeles School District play a substantial role in service delivery, even though it was the faith-based organization that took the lead in the program design. In this program, certified public school teachers are responsible for providing instruction in

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the GED classes, and probation officers are responsible for case management, brokering needed services for participants and performing their traditional tracking and monitoring functions.

Relatively few faith-based practices routinely occur in either the Los Angeles or Brooklyn programs. Participants at the Los Angeles site do not necessarily see it as a church program; instead, they see it as a program that just happens to be located at a church. That is, while participants were told in advance that they were enrolled in a program that was associated with a faith-based organization, it was the program's focus on education rather than on issues of faith that came through most clearly to them.

In Brooklyn, staff in the District Attorney's Office are vigilant about keeping faith-based practices within the written policies developed by the program. They caution mentors to limit the practice of asking participants to attend church services and ask them not to discuss religion with participants unless it is the youth who initiates the discussion.

The Program Setting

The occurrence of faith-based practices may vary as a function of the setting in which the program is offered. Program operators are constantly aware of the thin line they must walk regarding the separation of church and state. As a result, they are much less likely to engage in faith-based practices when program activities take place in public settings—particularly in the public schools.

This was illustrated by the Positive Connections program, which is operated by the Grace and Truth Full Gospel Pentecostal Church in Denver in several settings, including the church, middle schools and the girls' detention center. We found that faith-related practices were considerably muted when program sessions took place in the middle schools, while they were given freer rein in sessions taking place at the church or detention center.

As the above example suggests, faith-based practices seem to occur more frequently in those programs in which participant activities actually take place in churches rather than in a neutral site provided by a partner. When activities are at a neutral site, such as a school or community center, there are generally fewer opportunities for participants to have routine interactions with congregation members or to become engaged in routine church activities. When these programs are actually located on church property, the ownership of the

program can be extended to the congregation as a whole rather than to just the pastor, youth pastor or one or two prominent church leaders who are typically involved.

However, not all programs that offer participant activities in their churches have a high salience of faith. The churches participating in the Los Angeles GED program allow their space to be used as the site for GED classes. However, their role has thus far been limited to the provision of space; few faith-based practices are evident. The churches feel they are furthering their social justice mission by increasing the educational attainment of participants and, in the philosophy of this program, giving them an alternative to the criminal behavior they might otherwise inflict on the community. Moreover, participants get access to a site that is located in the community in which they live. This asset is particularly important because of gang involvement in the communities served by this program. These young people need access to classes in their own neighborhoods; going into another neighborhood could be the equivalent of going into enemy territory.

Core Programming and Extended Services

As described in the previous chapter, two modes of operation were common among the sites. In the first mode, they served enrolled participants with components that focused on achievement in education or employment. In the second, they engaged in community outreach and offered limited services to individuals who were not necessarily enrolled in the program. Faith practices are most common in the latter mode. When program operators focus their efforts on core programming activities, one observes few faith-based practices.

For the most part, the core treatment elements in the faith-based programs—the GED classes, the employability services—do not significantly differ from those that might be offered in a comparable secular program. The differences probably occur at the margins only. But it is not in these structured programs that the full story is told. It is in their extended services that the faith-based nature of the programs is given greater play. This is best illustrated by the Indianapolis site, whose weekly street outreach activities provide strong examples of faith practices. When the scene is shifted to program delivery (when participants come in to take life-skills classes or get job training or referrals), faith-related practices virtually disappear.

However, as discussed in Chapter III, there is also reason to believe that faith can more subtly influence social programming by shifting the focus of even the

core services away from formal programming and toward a more relational approach. Sites with this relational approach might incorporate some of the more valued aspects of traditional programs (tutoring, homework assistance and computer access), but this is not what is most important to them. Instead, our observations and interviews suggest that what staff believe is most valuable is the safe haven they provide, the adult relationships that are available and the positive peer relationships that support a new way of life. Somewhere between a program and a ministry, these sites provide the extended family or alternative community the program operators believe their participants need.

Motivated by Faith

The people working in the programs in the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth—be they staff or volunteers—are overwhelmingly people of faith. While sites have emphasized that they eschew discrimination of any kind, the lead agencies have nevertheless gravitated toward people of faith when hiring program executive directors and staff. In fact, many of them are ministers, pastors or officers of a church. However, because individual lead organizations represent many denominations, hiring is not limited to people of any specific denomination or faith. The Cleveland program, for example, has an interfaith staff of Christians and Muslims. Other sites have staff from various Christian denominations.

Because sites primarily recruit volunteers from congregations, most volunteer mentors are also people of faith. In fact, participants are assigned faith-based mentors in all but one of the programs where mentoring is a key component. The training of mentors is an area in which a site's philosophy about the expression of faith is often articulated. In one program, mentors are told they are expected to be living examples of the Bible as demonstrated in their interactions with the youth. Another site plans to use a Christian interpretation of The Search Institute's 40 youth development assets in its mentor training curriculum. But other sites have stressed in their mentor training sessions that mentors are not to share their faith with participants. The result of these practices is that participants are surrounded by a high concentration of adults for whom faith is an important part of life. This section explores the ways that faith is manifested in adult-youth interactions.

Expressing Faith by Offering Support

While faith-based practices are fairly common in many of the participating sites, program staff regard them more as an expression of their own faith than an attempt to proselytize. In interviews, staff said that by helping participants achieve their goals, they are fulfilling their own sense of religious mission. Even at the sites where the actual program operations are primarily secular, staff noted that the driving force for conducting these operations comes from their faith.

These sentiments are shared by volunteers, who believe that by mentoring a disadvantaged youth they are doing God's work. As such, they approach this work with a high degree of commitment. As one respondent said, it is because of her faith that she never quits:

> *My belief is that this is my purpose, my faith in God. I don't give up...A lot of people don't want to work with these kids—to come and work with them on a daily basis every day. It can be an extremely dangerous situation.*

Program directors and staff said their faith sustained them in the face of difficult circumstances and long odds against success. They also spoke of striving to reflect God's unconditional love in their own love for participants and to accept the youth in spite of their transgressions.[25] Said one:

> *They know we are not judgmental. We don't care what you did in the past; we just care about what you do now.*

In interviews, participants made clear that they recognized and appreciated the emotional support they received from the adults. As one said:

> *They are here for you when you need them, and they listen, and they are not quick to jump and make decisions for you.*

An essential element of the program is the relationships that staff and volunteers form with participants, and staff and volunteers have described this as an expression of their own relationship with God.

Seeking Spiritual Development

While staff and volunteers did not see their work as proselytizing, they were far from indifferent to the spiritual development of participants. Most expressed the hope that participants would eventually become members of the faith

community. However, they most often adopted a long-term perspective when thinking about this. They believed that by their example they were planting the seed that could eventually result in participants' acceptance of faith. As such, there was no need, in the words of various program operators, to "push religion" or "beat participants over the head with religion."

One pastor said:

> *I would like to see them start going to church but [they] don't have to. It's not forced. It is great if they have Christians relating to them—that will help them more than proselytizing.*

Another said that staff and volunteers prefer to set a good example, with the expectation that some participants might eventually be motivated to ask questions about faith. If that happened, they were prepared to respond. Otherwise, they did not attempt to push or persuade. A pastor who served as a mentor in one of the programs said, "If our theology rubs off on a participant, so be it." However, he emphasized that this was not the focus of his mentoring.

Program staff were willing to let participants come to religion naturally, as a cumulative result of the variety of their life experiences, not just this one. An instantaneous conversion where one's life was suddenly and totally turned around was not an anticipated outcome for these program operators. They envisioned a longer process in which the changes that occurred were incremental but cumulative.

How Participants Responded to Faith-Based Practices

Participants did not seem to react negatively to the faith-based practices that occurred. They agreed to enroll in the programs knowing they were faith-based, since referral sources gave potential participants up-front information about the nature of the program and offered referrals to alternative programs to those youth who preferred them. Thus, those likely to have disapproved of the faith-based practices would probably not have chosen to enroll.

Even when they were not attracted to the faith-based practices, participants did not feel they were being subjected to untoward pressure. They knew they

would not be penalized if they did not participate in religious practices. And they were often willing to go along with them. Participants tended to say, "It doesn't matter." As one explained:

> *It's alright. One person will pray, and then at the end they let other people who have problems talk. Like they might say, "I got to go to court tomorrow and might get locked up, so will everyone pray?" Most people feel okay with it. We respect it as long as they respect us doing our stuff.*

At the same time, our interviews with participants suggested that their level of comfort with the religious practices that occurred was not always immediate; sometimes it was reached gradually. One youth in a detention center recalled having been uncomfortable when she first came into contact with staff from one of the programs. She felt that she did not know the individuals and did not believe in the efficacy of prayer. She nevertheless decided to give it a try and, after a period of struggle with her beliefs, continued meeting with program staff for prayer and reading of the Scripture. She noted that the fact that program staff were willing to share their own experiences—telling her of some of the troubles they had when they were younger and how faith had transformed them—was a critical element in her increased level of comfort.

One of the arguments for bringing faith-based organizations to the table is the belief that powerful effects could occur if troubled young people get closer to God and are inspired to change their lives. This point of view was articulated in an interview with a pastor at one of the sites:

> *We believe faith is the key. If the person is to change, he must do so from the inside out. You need Christ or God in your life. You won't change otherwise—not money, prison or anything will do it.*

However, when we interviewed participants about this question, we found few who said that he or she had become more religious as a result of the program. Most participants, when asked if their faith had increased, simply said "no."

One participant did say that the program had indeed affected his religious behaviors. Because of the program, he became curious about the Bible and began to read it regularly. Another participant told us that as a result of her participation in the program, her faith had increased and that henceforth God was to be a part of her life in every way—that He would always be there to talk to and to support her and would never let her down. In fact, she had decided that she wanted to become a minister.

Another said:

> *I used to be hateful, and now I am learning to pray on my own for other people, and I'm learning how to take care of myself and interact with people more appropriately. When I get out of here, I am going to give my life to God and stop hanging out with the wrong people.*

Such responses, though, were the exception. Future research will permit us to determine whether there are significant impacts that result from participation in these programs and whether those impacts are mediated through an increase in religiosity.

Seeking a Balance

If the sites participating in the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth are any indication, youth programming operated by faith-based institutions is likely to be distinctly different from programs operated by secular organizations. Faith is a salient factor in the majority of the programs; it is highly salient in a significant minority of them.

Faith is manifested in the faith-based staff and volunteers who work with the participants, in the prayers that are likely to be said in any gathering of two or more, in Bible study and the reading of other sacred texts, in the religious music that is played in the background, and in the incorporation of religious content into the substantive curricula of the program.

In spite of this, few overt attempts are made to convert youth or to get them to join a particular denomination or faith. While staff and volunteers do hope that participants will eventually join a religious community, they do not believe that they alone are responsible for making this happen. Thus, they are careful not to try to "beat participants over the head" with faith.

At the same time, while these respondents feel confident that what they are doing is not proselytizing, the sites are often uncertain about what they can and cannot do if they are receiving funding from the government. These programs operate under complex funding auspices. Each has multiple funders and receives both private and public funds either directly or through secular intermediaries. Some of these sources of funding are strict in disallowing expressions of faith, while others are more open to them.

Balancing these circumstances is something of a high-wire act that the sites attempt to execute with as much skill as possible. Aware of the controversy surrounding public funding of faith-based programming, they want to avoid jeopardizing their ability to draw on public funds that could help their communities. They have taken varying approaches to this task, adopting a range of practices in an effort to comply with the law while also remaining true to their missions.

The range is wide. Some churches that are nominal partners in the initiative were reluctant to become actively involved in the program. As one pastor said:

> *Our hope has always been to share the message of the Cross to people. We haven't involved ourselves as much [in the program] as we would like because the public schools are involved in the classes. We are not sure how [our involvement] would be received.*

Other sites have developed an understanding of what is and is not an acceptable practice. One organization's policy stated it this way:

> *In order not to violate constitutional prohibitions, secular alternatives must be available, and enrollment in the program must be voluntary and fully informed. Staff and volunteers must be trained and monitored to ensure that they do not* ***require*** *participation in religious services or activities, or [allow] profession of a particular creed or belief to become a requirement of success or continued participation.*

Many of the sites seem to be operating on the basis of some version of this policy.

From the perspective of the sites then, it is not proselytizing when they expose participants to religious practices, as long as they do not require participants to take part. Nor do they consider it proselytizing if mentors invite participants to attend religious services with them, as long as they are not requiring that they do so or requiring that they join the church. In their lexicon, it is proselytizing only if participants are coerced into taking part in religious practices to receive program benefits or if participants have no secular alternative for the same services.

CONCLUSIONS

During the early implementation period of the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth, sites worked to recruit young people who had committed juvenile or criminal offenses or were considered to be at great risk of doing so, and to develop services and supports that would address the particular needs of this target population.

On the whole, we were encouraged by the faith-based organizations' early implementation of these programs for high-risk youth. The organizations seemed on a fairly sound footing regarding the role of faith. They were fully capable of focusing on the attainment of such traditional outcomes as education, employment and reduced recidivism for their participants without needing to incorporate faith-related practices into program operations in an overly intrusive manner. They were willing to comply with limitations on the expression of faith whenever and wherever it was clear that failing to do so would jeopardize the attainment of these goals. By contrast, sites experienced greater challenges in their efforts to deliver their education, employment and mentoring programs consistently.

In the sections below, we present some of the specifics of these overall conclusions.

The sites successfully recruited a population of high-risk youth who, consistent with initiative guidelines, had either committed juvenile offenses or were at risk for doing so. Participating faith-based organizations were successful in forming effective partnerships within the faith community and with the justice community.

Across all sites, the lead agencies were successful in creating coalitions of congregations committed to working together to address the issue of high-risk youth in their communities. Because they felt called by their faith to move beyond the walls of the church to respond to issues in the outside world, these congregations—primarily the Christian denominations, which are the majority in the target communities—were able to transcend denominational differences and work together with relatively little difficulty.

Most sites also developed partnerships with the justice community (including police, juvenile courts, probation, juvenile detention facilities and district attorneys' offices) with relative ease. The justice community was interested in undertaking these partnerships because of what it saw as the church's assets: its presence in high-crime communities and the respect in which it is held by community residents. In addition, the justice community was seeking alternative responses to increasingly high rates of juvenile arrests and incarceration and saw faith-based organizations as a viable option.

This issue—the development of partnerships within the faith community and between the faith and justice communities—is discussed fully in Hartmann (forthcoming), *Collaborating for High-Risk Youth: Faith and Justice Partnerships*, a companion report to this one.

During the study period, the sites enrolled 494 participants about whom we received data. The majority of these participants were African American (88%), male (72%), and consistent with a mean age of a little over 16, currently enrolled in school (79%). More than three-fifths of these young people had committed juvenile or criminal offenses that ranged from such status offenses as curfew violations or truancy to serious offenses against persons and property, including burglary, robbery and assault. Sixty percent had been arrested at least once.

These participants, the majority of whom came from single-parent households, also exhibited multiple risk behaviors that included involvement with negative peers and such academic problems as negative school behavior, suspensions and

repeating grades. They also possessed assets that programs could build on and strengthen. Most important perhaps, the majority had at least one adult with whom they felt comfortable speaking about problems or other personal issues.

Sites have not taken full advantage of the justice system's ability to refer participants and offer them alternatives to incarceration.

The majority of the youth who participated in the initiative were recruited through sources other than the justice system—schools, direct outreach, referrals by parents or church members, and self-referrals. Less than a third of participants (29%) came to the program as the result of a referral from the sites' partners in the justice system—the police, probation departments, district attorney's or public defender's offices, juvenile detention facilities or the courts.

This finding suggests that the sites are not fully capitalizing on the benefits of partnerships with the justice system. Among the major benefits of such a partnership is the ability of parties within juvenile justice to refer youth to the program operated by the faith-based organization and to offer them the program as an alternative to incarceration. Focusing on youth who are not currently before the bar of justice, even if they have had some previous juvenile justice involvement, does not invoke the considerable discretionary powers of the individuals and organizations that have joined with the faith-based organizations in this effort.

The juvenile justice system's willingness to refer youth to the program depended on the faith-based organizations' commitment to concentrating on young people who had been in trouble with the law *and* on their ability to deliver the services they promised.

The National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth focuses on a particularly difficult population—young people who have committed juvenile or criminal offenses, or are considered to be at great risk of doing so. There was some initial hesitation about working with these high-risk youth in most of the sites that participated in the initiative. Those sites that were most successful in garnering referrals from the justice system, however, were the ones that faced this hesitation up front and were able to overcome these initial reservations. Sites that were unable to gain a consensus on the importance of concentrating on high-risk youth had less success in generating referrals from the justice community.

While this initial willingness to serve high-risk youth helped launch the flow of referrals from the justice system, it was not always sufficient to firmly establish the confidence of juvenile justice partners in the ability of the sites to function as a reliable partner in the task of working with high-risk youth and to ensure a continuing flow of referrals. Continued juvenile justice referrals appeared to be a function of the faith-based partner's actual acceptance of reasonable numbers of participants and its ability to deliver the kind of programming it had promised. When it appeared that the program could not do so (if, for example, they did not have enough mentors to meet their justice partner's expectation that each referred youth would be placed in a one-to-one relationship with a supportive adult), referrals from the justice system were likely to lessen.

While the sites were successful in offering a fairly broad array of services and supports appropriate for high-risk youth, they nevertheless faced significant challenges in delivering these services at the appropriate levels and intensities.

In its design for the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth, P/PV sought a balance between requiring that sites conform to a specific program model and allowing them to follow their own leads in developing programs consistent with their own sensibilities. This decision was consistent with P/PV's interest in learning whether faith-based organizations would develop programs similar to those operated by secular organizations or design their own distinctive approaches.

With this in mind, P/PV adopted an inclusive approach to the management of the initiative, working with the sites that closely conformed to its guidelines as well as those that took a more experimental approach to program implementation. The sites responded to this approach by implementing programs that significantly varied in terms of the array of services they provided and in terms of the consistency and reliability with which these services were delivered to participants.

The array of services offered was fairly broad, although participating sites have concentrated on the three major program services specified in the program guidelines: mentoring, education and employment readiness. These services were sometimes directly provided by the lead organizations and sometimes by referral to partnering social service organizations.

While the focus of service delivery was on the participants enrolled in the programs, many sites also dedicated a significant amount of their resources to

working within the broader community. For instance, the three programs modeled on Boston's Ten Point Coalition have attempted to establish a street presence of clergy and volunteers, and programs have also established a presence in the juvenile detention centers, meeting with the young people there for prayer sessions and counseling about their plans for re-entering the community. Court advocacy is another activity that program staff undertake for youth from the community, even though they may not be enrolled in their formal programs.

A satisfactory array of services was thus available to participants. However, the sites experienced significant challenges when it came to implementing the program procedures that would ensure the consistent delivery of these services at sufficient levels of intensity. These difficulties are explained in greater detail in the sections that follow.

Participating sites had significant difficulties implementing their mentoring programs. The sites that attempted to implement some form of mentoring experienced challenges in recruiting sufficient numbers of volunteers. For several reasons, participating congregations yielded fewer potential mentors than had been expected. First, while the pastors of these churches were often supportive of the program and its goal of reaching out to high-risk youth, members of the congregations often did not have a similar level of buy-in to the program. Relatively few of these individuals were prepared to mentor a young person who had committed juvenile offenses or to make the kind of long-term intensive commitment that mentoring requires. Given these difficulties, some sites switched to group mentoring to make the best use of the mentors that had been recruited. In other sites, the mentoring program languished for lack of a solution to the recruitment problem.

In addition to the recruitment challenges, participating sites did not always put in place the procedures—including volunteer screening, training, matching and supervision—that have been shown to make for effective mentoring. This sometimes resulted in matches that did not live up to program expectations with respect to the frequency of interactions between mentors and youth, or in the duration of the match.

While these experiences are disappointing, they are fairly typical of what happens when new organizations first undertake mentoring. The effectiveness of mentoring is well known, but what is less widely acknowledged is how difficult it is to implement these programs well, particularly for inexperienced organizations that are first undertaking it (along with other

components of a multi-service program). As youth-serving organizations across the board have attempted to incorporate mentoring into their operations, virtually all have experienced initial difficulties in recruiting and retaining mentors.

In most cases, the educational and employment components were underdeveloped. Participants came to the programs with significant academic deficiencies, including histories of poor grades, truancy, suspensions and expulsions—problems that, if not properly addressed, could portend a deepening involvement in criminal activities. While several sites have developed structured tutoring programs that seem promising, most programs provided their in-school participants with after-school homework assistance and computer access opportunities that do not seem intensive enough given the magnitude of the youth's academic problems.

Similarly, while there was at least one example of a well-structured employment program for out-of-school youth, few sites offered intensive employment-related activities or instruction to their in-school participants. Yet experts recommend that in-school youth be given opportunities for work experiences under adult supervision in addition to the more commonly provided employability exercises that include instruction in proper workplace attitudes and behaviors, as well as practice in completing resumes and job applications.

These and other challenges that the sites experienced have encouraged us to consider moving toward a more prescriptive approach to the management of the initiative. This approach would involve providing sites with more materials and instruction that would translate selected best practices into explicit program operations. This approach does not challenge sites to create new program models, but it does allow them to more immediately benefit from models that have already been developed and tested by secular organizations.

The implementation challenges that the sites faced seem at least partly caused by their relative inexperience in operating social programs and some of the organizational and staffing issues associated with it.

Most of the lead organizations entered the initiative with limited experience in programming for high-risk youth. Only 8 of the 15 had existed for more than five years, and even fewer had operated programs for high-risk youth. Therefore, some of the implementation challenges observed during the study period can be attributed to this lack of experience.

Another source of difficulty lay in the fact that, for the lead agencies that were created specifically for the purposes of serving high-risk youth, there was no effective differentiation between program staff and organizational staff. Thus, the same individuals were expected to meet many conflicting demands—working on both programmatic and organizational tasks, developing and implementing several different program components, providing services for enrolled participants as well as outreach services to the larger community, and focusing on the existing initiative while also planning for replication or expansion.

While the sites avoided proselytization, faith nevertheless shaped key aspects of their program operations.

The sites were keenly aware of the need to avoid practices that could jeopardize their ability to receive public and private funding to serve high-risk youth in their communities, and they were meticulous in their efforts to avoid any activity that could be interpreted as proselytizing. On initial contact, participants were informed of the faith-based nature of the program, and any who objected were referred to secular programs that offered similar services. Neither participation in the program nor the receipt of benefits was predicated on the profession of any religious belief or the adoption of religious behaviors. Moreover, participants were never required to participate in any religious activity.

At the same time, however, the sites elected to create programs that are for the most part rich in faith content. A number of faith-related practices were evident in the programming for youth. Prayer was the most prevalent: it could be observed at every level of program operations. Other commonly observed faith-based practices included reading and studying sacred texts, incorporating religious concepts into program curricula and exposing participants to religious music. Program staff told us that, while they were not indifferent to the spiritual development of their participants, the faith-related practices were an expression of the faith of the staff and volunteers involved in the program, not an attempt to proselytize.

Program design features influenced the prevalence of faith-related practices.

While faith practices were manifested across the sites, there was considerable variation in the extent to which these practices were evident in any given site. Their prevalence was associated with such factors in the program design as the role played by secular partners, the setting in which program activities took

place, whether a site was delivering core services or providing outreach to the surrounding communities, and whether the program focused on formal components or was more concerned with creating a safe haven for its participants.

Programs in which secular partners played an active role in the actual delivery of services generally exhibited fewer faith practices. The same was true of programs in which participant activities took place in a neutral setting rather than in a house of worship. Programs that emphasized the uniform delivery of traditional content—such as employability training or GED instruction—were less likely to exhibit faith practices in their ongoing operations. Faith-based practices occurred with greater frequency when program activities took place at a church or other house of worship, and when the program leadership attempted to create an alternative community or safe haven where congregational adults and youth came together to support a new lifestyle for participants who had a troubled past.

ENDNOTES

1. Among the foundations that have taken lead roles in this regard are The Lilly Endowment, The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Annie E. Casey Foundation and The Ford Foundation, a leader in this effort and also a key funder of the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth.

2. For example, one study of 131 congregations in six urban areas showed that the economic value provided to the community of building space, utilities, staff and volunteer time, and donated funds and supplies amounts to an average of $140,000 per congregation each year. See Diane Cohen and A. Robert Jaegar, *Sacred Places at Risk* (Philadelphia: Partners for Sacred Places, 1998).

3. In a more recent study, researchers from the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society undertook the first-ever congregational census of a large urban city—Philadelphia. Preliminary findings estimate that the approximately 2,000 local religious congregations in Philadelphia contribute a range of programs and services: pre-school programs, such as child care and nursery schools; after-school programs that provide tutoring and recreation; summer programs, including summer camps and summer programs for teens; educational services to adults, such as GED and adult literacy programs, and computer training; mentoring programs; and services to prisoners and their families—the replacement value of which is $227,772,960 per year.

3. "Who Escapes? The Relation of Churchgoing and Other Background Factors to the Socioeconomic Performance of Black Male Youths from Inner-City Tracts," in Richard B. Freeman and Harry J. Holzer (eds.), *The Black Youth Employment Crisis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 353-376. For an example of less positive findings, see John K. Cochran, Peter B. Wood and Bruce J. Arneklev, "Is the Religiosity-Delinquency Relationship Spurious?: A Test of Arousal and Social Control Theories," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 31:92-123, 1994.

4. In addition to those 15 sites, the Boston Ten Point Coalition is also part of the demonstration, serving as an exemplar and source of new innovations.

5. For a full discussion of the lead agencies, see Tracey A. Hartmann. *Collaborating for High-Risk Youth: Faith and Justice Partnerships* (Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, forthcoming).

6. It should be noted that the majority of these organizations are African-American congregations—a fact that is consistent with the finding that it is African-American congregations that are most likely to become social service providers. (See James Castelli and John D. McCarthy, "Religion-Sponsored Social Service Providers: The Not-So-Independent Sector," The Aspen Institute Non-Profit Research Sector Fund, 1998; and Mark Chaves, "Religious Congregations and Welfare Reform: Who Will Take Advantage of Charitable Choice?" *American Sociological Review* 64:836-846, 1999.)

   In addition to these active partners, nine of the sites include partnerships with other congregations that have signed an agreement or pledged support but currently provide no resources to

the initiative. The number of these nominal partners ranges from more than 200 in Cleveland (where large ministerial alliances have signed on in support of the initiative) to, more typically, 10 or 20 in other sites.

7. To document the numbers and characteristics of the participants who were recruited, P/PV developed a management information system (MIS) that would collect these data uniformly. However, consistent with the exploratory nature of the research, sites were permitted to gather the requested information about participants' characteristics and behaviors in various ways, depending on the sources that were readily available to them, before entering those data into the MIS. These sources included referral documents, existing records, staff observations, staff judgments and participant interviews. Thus, the data on which this chapter is based depict the programs' participants as they became known to the sites' intake staff through a variety of ways.

8. Two sites are excluded from the analysis. The Fresno program had not begun serving participants during the period being reported on, and the Metropolitan Denver Black Church Initiative was not able to collect consistent information from its participants on an ongoing basis. However, while the Denver site is not included in the quantitative analysis of program participants, it is discussed later in this chapter. Data for that discussion are drawn from focus groups, observations and in-depth interviews with participants conducted by researchers.

9. See Freeman and Holzer, 1986 (see endnote 3).

10. T.J. Dishion, J. McCord and F. Poulin, "When Interventions Harm: Peer Groups and Problem Behavior," *American Psychologist*, 54(9):755-764, 1999.

11. Marvin Eisen, Christiana Pallitto, Carolyn Bradner and Natalya Bolsun, *Teen Risk-Taking: Promising Prevention Programs and Approaches* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 2000).

12. See Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs, *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* (Washington, D.C., 1995). The Comprehensive Strategy focuses on preventing youth from becoming delinquent and improving the juvenile justice system's response to delinquent offenders through a continuum of graduated sanctions and such treatment alternatives as community-based corrections and after-care services.

13. Joan McCord, Cathy Spatz Widom and Nancy A. Crowell (eds.), *Juvenile Crime, Juvenile Justice*, Panel on Juvenile Crime: Prevention, Treatment and Control, Committee on Law and Justice and Board on Children, Youth and Families (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2001).

14. P.Z. Schrochet, J. Burghardt and S. Glazerman, *National Job Corps Study: The Short-Term Impacts of Job Corps on Participants' Employment and Related Outcomes* (Princeton, N.J.: Mathematica Policy Research, 2000).

15. Joseph P. Tierney and Jean Baldwin Grossman, with Nancy L. Resch, *Making A Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters* (Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1995).

16. See endnote 14.

17. H.N. Snyder and M. Sickmund, *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report*, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, NCJ 178257 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1999).

18. For a review of studies on this issue, see Dishion et al., 1999 (see endnote 10).

19. Harold Dean Trulear, *Faith-Based Institutions and High-Risk Youth: First Report to the Field* (Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 2000).

20. Amy L. Sherman, "Faith-Based Approaches to Social Services: Lessons Learned," *Faith Alive!*, A conference sponsored by the Hudson Institute's Welfare Policy Center, Milwaukee, 1999.

21. See, for example, Michelle Alberti Gambone and Amy J.A. Arbreton, *Safe Havens: The Contributions of Youth Organizations to Healthy Adolescent Development* (Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1997). The report focuses on Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, and Girls, Inc. Among other topics, it discusses the ways in which these organizations provide youth with a sense of belonging and support that comes from both peers and adult staff.

22. This approach works because site staff are often willing to extend themselves on a number of fronts: to fulfill their regular staff responsibilities, to serve as mentors for their assigned youth and to reach out to other participants. For example, one of the staff members who has a formally assigned mentee told us that he makes daily stops at the program to talk with all of the youth, particularly seeking out and engaging his mentee's brother, since the two brothers are close.

23. For a discussion of these issues, see Kathryn Furano, Phoebe A. Roaf, Melanie B. Styles and Alvia Y. Branch, *Big Brothers/Big Sisters: A Study of Program Practices* (Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1993).

24. See, for example, Phoebe A. Roaf, Joseph P. Tierney and Danista E.I. Hunte, *Big Brothers/Big Sisters: A Study of Volunteer Recruitment and Screening* (Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1994).

25. This does not mean sweetness and light always. With acceptance often comes a strict approach to discipline and a focus on having youth take responsibility for their actions.

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